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In this qualitative research study, the researcher utilizes an interpretivist and critical paradigm epistemology to explore the ways in which immigration and Latino/a people are discussed within news media stations CNN, FOX News, and MSNBC and how those narratives may appear in educational spaces.

The research process included two phases: phase one was a news media document analysis, looking at transcripts between 2008 to 2012 to investigate when and how terms like "illegal alien," "illegal immigrant" and "immigration" appeared and in what context. Phase two consisted of four interviews of educators and support personnel.

The results of this study conclude that there is a specific narrative being produced within news media as it relates to Latino/a people within the context of immigration. Additionally, these narratives and representations do appear in educational pedagogy and attitudes within schools systems as they work with a growing Latino/a student population.

‘YOU DON’T EVEN KNOW ME:’ EXPLORING NEWS MEDIA, EDUCATIONAL
POLICIES AND PRACTICES AFFECTING LATINO/A STUDENTS:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

by

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To my professors Dr. Villaverde and Dr. Bettez for pushing and challenging me.

To my Dad, Skip Boyer.

To my friends who kept me going throughout this process, and to Ms. Emily Griffie for holding me accountable and supporting me in all I do.

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ever since I can remember, I have used media, which include films, television, and music as an educator to learn about issues of class and gender, and though I didn't know it as a young person, I used these films as a form of curriculum to learn about my lower class, white world. More importantly, they gave me something to relate to, even if, at the time, I didn't know that's what I needed. I was accessing my culture through media in order to make sense of my environment and learn how to act appropriately within my given culture. Barbara Joseph (2000) explores this as she states, "Culture essentially means sense-making. It becomes the system in which people organize their perceptions of their environment and their lives (...) symbols and rituals socialize individuals and help them to articulate their understandings of their lives and values," (p.16). Joseph illustrates my experiences as a child; I used media to negotiate my environment, and used the symbols on film to learn to understand life and what was valued in my age group and developing teen hood. For me, media served as an educator while also instructing and offering a form of escape. Media can be used as a cultural educator to learn accepted social norms, behaviors, and interests. Joseph (2000) explores this further as she contends that curriculum conceptualized as culture educates us to pay attention to belief systems, values, behaviors, language, artistic expression, the environment in which education takes

place, power relationships, and most importantly, the norms that affect our sense about what is right or appropriate (p.19). Learning the norms, or what is ‘right’ or ‘appropriate’ can most often and easily be learned from media consumption; to learning English, to dress, behavior, values, interests, and cultural cues, “the influential role that broadcasting and emergent information and computer media play in organizing, shaping, and disseminating information, ideas, and values is creating a powerful public pedagogy” (Giroux, 1999; Luke, 1997 qtd. in Kellner and Share, 2007, p.3). This powerful public pedagogy necessitates, according to Kellner and Share (2007), “a critical media literacy to empower students and citizens to adequately read media messages and produce media themselves in order to be active participants in a democratic society” (p.3). However, what does this critical media literacy mean, why is it necessary, and how does it affect Latino/a students that are immigrants?¹ . With these theoretical constructs in mind, I have chosen to investigate the ways in which media and the stories described in news reports about Latino/as and immigrants may influence teachers and support personnel in educational spaces. Working at a writing center at a community college where I often interacted with Latino/a students who faced difficulty in communicating with their instructors, understanding what their instructors wanted, and were sometimes struggling as second language learners raised my awareness about the needs of the Latino/a population. I will explore this in more detail later in the chapter.

¹ I worked in a writing center at a community college with Latino/a students who frequently came in and asked for assistance. Often these students alluded to dealing with other issues besides school, and also frequently had questions about not just writing, but what their teachers expected from them, and how to communicate to their teachers so that the teachers could understand the particular struggles the students themselves faced.

Thus, I chose to focus on high schools within a school district in North Carolina to see if media does influence the experiences of Latino/a students who, documented or not, have the right to an education until age 21. High school teachers and school members were chosen because students are working toward graduating and may have aspirations toward higher education; here is where the stakes become greater for students and they likely have a lot at risk at this point in their lives.

Therefore, for the purposes of this study, when I use the term “immigrant” I am focusing specifically on Latino/a students. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, in 2010, 58% of undocumented immigrants were from Mexico. Many Latino/a students are immigrants, and often, whether they are documented or not, experience this label and the corresponding consequences given the current debates around immigration. Most of the focus in these debates is on Latino/as specifically because of the proximity of states like Arizona and Texas to Mexico; and in discussion about immigration, often when the term “immigrant” is used in news media, it is conflated with the Latino/a community and this particular group is specifically targeted in the current national discussions.

My interest in this topic grows out of working in The Writing Center at a community college which, until fall 2012, was only a desk staffed by other English instructors, one at a time. Students either made an appointment or came as a walk-in, and since there was only one person working at a time, only one student could be seen at a time. There was not enough money for more than one person to be on duty. This is the best the college could offer due to budget restrictions and a lack of available space;

additionally, The Writing Center was not a college-funded assistance and was and still continues to be staffed and paid for by The English Department rather than an additional service that the college provides. Because of this, The Writing Center does not receive enough funding or any assistance from the college to meet the demands of anywhere between 30,000 and 40,000 students depending on the year and semester. Within the last two fiscal years of 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, part-time tutors as well as full-time English instructors now staff The Writing Center with about four to five people at a time. They have extended hours to around 40 hours per week, with online tutoring also available. As of fall 2013, instead of one person at one desk, there is now a small staff that offers assistance in The Writing Center, which is now housed under the library, with multiple cubicles for tutoring sessions with up to five students at a time. However, it is still underfunded and understaffed.

The center usually works with any students who would like additional one-on-one assistance with their writing assignments, mostly those students in the developmental or first year courses of writing composition, rhetoric and argument. Many students who visit The Writing Center, however, are those learning how to speak, read, and write English. They are often struggling because they are simultaneously working to learn English, may be new to U.S. school culture, as well as learning to understand what is being asked of them. Working in the Center allowed an opportunity to explore the ways in which educators interact with, teach, and approach their English language learner students, and how teachers may view these students. Where do teachers get their

information about people different from themselves? Does exposure to media create or lead to preconceived notions about specific groups of students, their abilities or their potential? Does exposure to images and narratives in media affect teacher pedagogy and understanding of Latino/a students, due to their current frequency and prevalence in national discussions? Often times, students, especially immigrant students, and teachers, use media as a cultural educator to adopt accepted norms, behaviors and interests. It is not a leap to wonder if these discussions are being absorbed and at play, whether consciously or not, within educational spaces.

As a tutor in The Writing Center, this research is also in response to my own questions as a teacher as to how to better serve my Latino/a students, having worked with undocumented students who struggled to not only understand what their teachers were asking of them, but simultaneously may have been adapting to a new culture, learning a new language, and negotiating their environment. As a community college teacher, the student body is quite diverse with specific and different challenges to face. I wondered how instructors may be affecting these particular students, and how particular pedagogical choices may be a result of a lack of understanding, training, and knowledge of the challenges for Latino/a students. It was my hope that this research might lead to insight into these questions, and investigate how media may influence how teachers approach their Latino/a students who may also be immigrants.

The focus on Latino/a students also stems from the very explicit surveillance around particular immigrant bodies. Latino/as are targeted in Border States of Mexico as

well as states like North Carolina where there is an influx of Latino/a immigrants. Often these two concepts: immigrant and Latino/a are conflated to be synonymous with one another. There is a different degree to the racism that affects Latino/as as well as the type of legislation that is developed contingent on the proximity of a state to Mexico.

Historically, people from Mexico are not crossing any border, as Arizona, Texas, parts of California and Nevada was taken from Mexico. The history of this region is often ignored and raises contention around brown skin bodies and influences the legislation of brown skin. The focus here is that in the immigration discussion, Latino/a people are overwhelmingly focused on and legislated in the southwest and east of the United States. The idea here is that illegality is “socially, culturally, and politically constructed. As people move across ever porous national boundaries, their status is determined by policies in those nation-states, not by some essential quality inherent in the migrant’s genetic code or personal philosophy on life,” (Chavez, 2008, p.25). This divide creates a dichotomy: the United States versus Mexico. Because of this narrative, Latino/as as well as their descendants are created as people who cannot and will not become part of U.S. society. They are forever marginalized as ‘other.’

Statement of the Problem

Many of the students who came in seeking assistance in The Writing Center were students who didn’t just have questions about writing or structure and organization, but were students who were struggling to understand what their teacher was asking of them, questions about the assignment instructions, and assistance in writing in English, which

often was not their first language. Often these students were Latino/a, and some of them confided that they were undocumented, or had recently immigrated into the United States. In conversations with colleagues about these students and their own pedagogy, many admitted they were not trained and unsure about how to teach students who were struggling with English as a new language, and often stated that they weren't sure what resources or assistance they should or could provide. Additionally, while engaging in these discussions, I also noticed that there is a continuing increase in the rise of immigrant populations in schools, and many of these populations are Latino/a. I also began to become aware that in immigration discourse, many narratives continued to emerge: narratives that centered around language like "illegal alien," and racist, reductionist depictions of immigrants as criminals, aliens, or violent drug cartel members. This led me to wonder how discussions and depictions about immigration and Latino/a people in news media may be reaching and influencing teachers who have Latino/a students (who may or may not be immigrants) in their classroom and if they were, how they may be affecting a teacher's pedagogical practice around these particular students.

This study is significant because immigration is being focused on in pervasive and intrusive ways on a national scale within the last few years as the topic gains popularity in politics and national electoral discussions. The focus on Latino/a populations is different than immigrants from other areas: legislation and immigration policies are being developed directly in response to people immigrating from Mexico or other Latin American countries, targeting those with brown skin and supposed Spanish accents. As

this topic gains momentum, it's important for those in education to be mindful about these narratives as the Latino/a student population increases, particularly in the southwest and eastern United States. This is a population that will continue to grow within schools, and one that will, more and more, need to be addressed and assisted in their educational pursuits.

As I began to research this issue, I observed that much of the academic literature written concerning immigration highlights the Latino/a population because this population is increasing in the United States, and immigration has grown synonymous with Latino/as. Further, much of the literature often discusses the struggles Latino/a immigrant students face, representation of Latino/a culture in different types of media, or challenges Latino/a immigrants, whether documented or not, might have to negotiate in accessing higher education. However, there is no literature that explores how the language used in news media reporting might appear in dialogues and discourse concerning educational policy and pedagogy within the everyday classroom; further, there is a lack of exploration of if and how national new media narratives may affect Latino/a people, particularly students, and if these narratives could be contributing to these student's struggles in education. Additionally, much of the research dealing with Latino/a immigration has been framed around a lack of contribution to the United States economy, taxes, or cost to the United States. Almost always, the term "immigrant" is linked with Latino/a people. If these narratives are emerging within teaching and members who work in an advisory capacity with Latino/a students, then it's important for

educators to be mindful of what's at play and if they may be influenced by the narratives that originate and spread from news media reporting on immigration.

In researching Latino/a representation, many pieces of literature focus on film and television, as Carlos E. Cortes, in Vargas and DePyssler (1998) argue, "Hollywood movies offer 'a kind of popular curriculum on immigration,' " (p. 407). Historically, Latino/as have been represented in stereotypical fashion, as Latin lovers, sexually charged women, caricatures of drug smugglers or field workers in film and television, but there has not been much exploration into the ways a curriculum may be constructed about immigration within a particular type of media: the news. Quite often, terms like "alien" or "illegal" are used to describe a particular person or group of people usually within the context of immigration, most often denoting a Latino/a person living in the United States without proper documentation. News outlets often postulate about who Latinos/as are, what they want and what they do or do not contribute to society. As social justice educators we have to ask, what are the narratives being constructed? Do these narratives seep into education? My purpose, then, is to examine the stories told about Latino/a immigrants and how these might be communicated into educational policy, pedagogy, and curriculum. This study attempts to illustrate how this representation and narrative may be linked to education.

Research Questions

This study focuses on teachers and administrators that work within a county who have Latino/a students and community members who work for organizations that operate

to connect immigrants to existing communities. This research study is focused on exploring the following questions: 1) What narratives are reported about Latino/a immigrants within prime time news media? 2) How might these narratives appear in teacher and support personnel interviews in their discussions with youth?

As an English instructor and educator, I see a student population with growing needs and a necessary broadening of research concerned with not just how media represents Latino/a people, but how those representations may be leaking into education. So, in Chapter 2, I review the literature as it relates to Latino/a representation in media. Chapter 3 outlines my epistemology and methodology. Chapter 4 is a document analysis of news media and the patterns that emerge concerning immigration. In Chapter 5, I discuss my findings of the interviews conducted with the teachers and support personnel who work with Latino/a students. Finally, Chapter 6 presents my conclusions and further implications for research.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Theory

According to Schubert (1997), a framework or paradigm is “a loosely connected set of ideas, values and rules that governs the conduct of inquiry, the ways in which data are interpreted, and the way the world may be viewed” (p.170). The frameworks that inform my research study and dictate how I interpret and view the results of my research begins with critical theory. For Kincheloe and McLaren (2003), critical theory is concerned with “issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of

race, class, and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion and other social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system” (437). In other words, how does power affect and construct the various pieces of a social system?

For this specific study, I am concerned with how issues of power and ideology within news media may affect education for Latino/a students and immigrants and how those systems construct a false narrative about Latino/a people. Critical theory guides my interrogation of how media as a social institution informs and affects those in education who work with Latino/a students.

For Kincheloe and McLaren (2003), critical theory contains the following criteria and purpose: 1) *critical enlightenment*: “analyzes competing power interests between groups and individuals within a society—identifying who gains and who loses in specific situations” (p.437). In other words, the goal is to “uncover those who win or lose in specific social arrangements” (p.437). 2) *Critical emancipation*: “those who seek emancipation attempt to gain the power to control their own lives” and attempts to “expose the forces that prevent individuals and groups from shaping the decisions that crucially affect their lives” (p.437). 3) *Rejection of economic determinism*: rejects the idea that economic factors dictate all other pieces of human existence and acknowledgment that there are multiple forms of power. 4) *Critique of instrumental or technical rationality*: reminds us that the “humanistic purpose of the research act” is important and that there are value judgments in the “production of so-called facts” (p. 438). 5) *The impact of desire*: acknowledges that desire can be “socially constructed and

used by power wielders for destructive and oppressive outcomes” (p. 438). 6)

Reconceptualized theory of power: hegemony: researchers understand that there is a need to understand the multi-faceted ways power operates “to dominate and shape consciousness” or concerned with the oppressive aspects of power (p.439). 7)

Reconceptualized theory of power: ideology: understanding that hegemony, “dominant power in the 20th century is not always exercised simply by physical force but also by social psychological attempts to win people’s consent to domination through cultural institutions such as the media, the schools, the family, and the church” (p.439), cannot be separated from the production of ideology. 8) *Reconceptualized critical theory of power*:

linguistic/discursive power: an understanding that language is not a mirror to society but shifts and moves depending on the context of which it’s used; in other words, it is not neutral or objective. 9) *Focuses on the relationships among culture, power, and*

domination: new forms of culture and domination are “produced as the distinction between the real and the simulated is blurred” (p.441). In order to have

counterhegemonic cultural research, it involves linking representations to powerful literacies and the ability to illustrate how these representations affect individuals on

various levels of race, class, gender and sexuality. 10) *The role of cultural pedagogy in*

critical theory: commitment to expose the process of cultural production that functions as a form of education, as it “generates knowledge, shapes values, and constructs identity”

(p.442). These ten tenets inform the ways in which I approach my research questions as well as inform the research paradigm I operate from in my analysis and interviews. The

research media narratives construct lived experiences about Latino/a immigrants and how those social constructions may affect educational spaces and subjectivities.

So, it is important to recognize that within a critical theory-informed qualitative study, that “although there are many moments within the process of researching when the critical dynamic of critical theory-informed research appears, there is none more important than the moment(s) of interpretation” and acknowledges that “in qualitative research there is only interpretation” and involves “making sense of what has been observed in a way that communicates understanding” (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2003, p.443). Thus, in the act of critically examining the media narratives and interview responses, there is an act of interpretation, and “to develop a form of cultural criticism revealing power dynamics within social and cultural texts,” (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2003, p.445). To interpret is to “tie interpretation to the interplay of larger social forces (the general) to the everyday lives of the individuals (the particular),” (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2003, p.445). Therefore, there are multiple truths, and the goal is to examine the meaning making of particular social forces. For the purposes of this study, it is to examine the social forces of news media and how it constructs rhetoric that is read as “truth” within U.S. culture and how that may affect and influence individual Latino/a immigrants in their educational experiences.

Critical Whiteness

In fall 2008, I had the opportunity to teach a cross-listed course between Women’s and Gender Studies and African American Studies on race and gender in

popular culture. There were approximately forty students in the course, with thirty seats designated with the AFS (African American Studies) marker and ten seats designated with the WGS (Women's and Gender Studies) marker. A majority of my students were students of color and I was a white teacher teaching a course designed to interrogate issues of power, privilege and difference; what I failed to realize, however, is what that might mean to students who have been historically, politically and socially oppressed and marginalized to have a teacher who is, without realizing it, engaging in what Haviland (2008) names as "white educational discourse," a "constellation of ways of speaking, interacting, and thinking in which White teachers gloss over issues of race, racism, and White supremacy in ways that reinforce the status quo, even when they have a stated desire to do the opposite" (p. 41). In other words, as a white teacher teaching courses in general, there is a danger in reifying the status quo and reproducing White supremacy without realizing it. But in the context of this particular class, I was attempting to unpack issues of privilege within race and gender without interrogating my own positionality. I was what Thompson (2003) describes as a "good white," someone who may "acknowledge white racism as a generic fact, [though] it is hard to acknowledge as a fact about ourselves. We want to feel like, and to be, good people. And we want to be *seen* as good people;" and in so doing, position ourselves as "authoritatively antiracist, [keeping] whiteness at the center of antiracism" (p. 8). By centering whiteness without interrogation while teaching a historically marginalized history and people, White supremacy is reinforced and reinscribed in a space where students of color look to strip that supremacy

away. According to Hyland (2005), “we do know that teachers participate in the reproduction of racial inequality and that teachers can mitigate or exacerbate the racist effects of schooling for their students of color depending on their pedagogical orientation” (p. 429). By failing to interrogate whiteness, this reproduction of racial inequality can and does occur. For Hatch (2002),

Qualitative research seeks to understand the world from the perspectives of those living in it. It is axiomatic in this view that individuals act on the world based not on some supposed objective reality but on their perceptions of the realities that surround them (p. 7).

If individuals act on the world based on their perceptions of reality, then an interrogation of reality has to happen. However, it is important to be constantly aware not to center white voices and by default, marginalizing student voices and their experiences, or, engaging in what Myers (2003) explains as “racetalk” (p. 129). Myers describes the goal of whiteness studies, stated by Anderson (2003) is to “‘destabilize’ white identity—to expose, examine, and challenge it.’ She asserts that most literature on whiteness ignores the ‘mechanisms’ and ‘sites’ of racial domination and subordination” (p. 129). Further, Myers describes racetalk, based on Morrison’s (1993) definition, as

‘the explicit insertion into everyday life of racial signs and symbols that have no meaning other than pressing African Americans to the lowest level of the racial hierarchy.’ Racetalk is symptomatic of a racial structure in which some racial/ethnic groups enjoy more privileges than others (p. 129).

White people enjoy more privileges than others, and specifically, it is a fact that white documented citizens enjoy more privileges not just through race, but also through language and assumed documented citizen status than Latino/a people and immigrants. . Additionally, Myers (2003) states “racism is always present in social interactions” as well as “the post-civil rights climate makes the public expression of racist ideas unacceptable, so its articulation becomes more subtle” (p. 130). If racism is always present in social interactions, how does that affect qualitative research? How does whiteness influence information gathered? Myers (2003) further argues, referencing Bonilla-Silva and Lewis (1999) that “there is a ‘new racism’ in the United States which destroys the fruits of civil rights while claiming color blindness. New racism is increasingly covert, unlike racism of the past” (p. 130). It is imperative to make explicit and to be critically aware as to how whiteness operates as a new racism, working covertly to silence research subjects. Through this paradigm, I hope to do what Woody Doane (2003) states is the purpose of engaging in critical whiteness studies as he argues, “whiteness studies are grounded in social change, particularly changes in the social relations reflected in the idea of ‘race.’ Social movements challenging white hegemony and social changes in American society created space for the ‘inclusion’ of whiteness as a key concept in our understanding of race and ethnic relations” (p. 6). In other words, I engage this framework to understand how white supremacy creates and influences the construction of rhetoric and narrative about Latino/a people.

Positionality

I grew up in a two-parent household; neither my mother nor father went to college and both worked blue-collar jobs. My mother was an administrative assistant and has been as far back as I can remember. My father worked as a route salesperson that delivered and picked up dirty laundry for restaurants, stores, hotels, etc. He worked fifty or sixty-hour work weeks to make, what in a good year, was 30,000 dollars. My parents used to own a house until my father lost his job and lost their house when I was just a baby. My whole life, we lived in rented apartments or townhomes, and in my high school years, the ugliest house in a middle-class neighborhood. My parents, especially when we were young, worked to supply us with whatever we wanted or needed, which often meant they went without. As I got older and my father grew ill, I worked at sixteen and beyond to help pay my parent's bills as well as my own for school, clothes, and car insurance. As far back as I can remember we struggled. I went to predominantly black schools in elementary and middle school, and one of the two "less achieving" high schools. Most of my friends from my younger years were people of color. My mother has more often than not worked at least two jobs. Growing up lower class, I also often experienced gender discrimination. This occurred in small pockets like in family interactions or at my places of work where I thought I could not really do anything about it without losing my job. However, as I look back on my lower class and gendered lived experiences, I've never really had to think about my race, even in the environments where I was a minority. I never realized that once I left that particular environment, my power and privilege would

be restored. Living most of my life as a lower class individual and seeing the constant struggles, stress, panic and fear my parents and my family experienced, I rarely recognized my race as a privilege. Looking back, I had friends who were more privileged monetarily than I was; they were white. I was able to align myself with these individuals and learn to negotiate a system that was already set up to help me succeed. It has been a struggle to admit and recognize this power and even more so to admit that despite my work as social justice educator, that I reify notions of white supremacy despite my good intentions. According to Kincheloe (1991), in order to interrogate educational reality,

The first step (...) is to understand the relationship between researchers and what they are researching. Where do we start such a process? I would argue that an awareness of self and the forces which shape the self is a prerequisite for the formulation of more effective methods of research. Knowledge of self allows researchers to understand how social forces and research conventions shape their definitions of knowledge, of inquiry, of effective educational practice (p. 29)

If the first step is to understand my relationship between myself and my research; where do we start such a process Kincheloe asks; we start with reflexivity in order to interrogate how my positionality influences my methods and interpretations of research. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000), reflexivity is

The process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the 'human as instrument' (...) it is a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself. Reflexivity forces us to come to terms not only with our choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with our selves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting. Shulamit Reinharz (1997), for example, argues that we not only 'bring the self to the field...[we also] create the

self in the field' (p. 3) (...) Reflexivity (...) demands that we interrogate each of our selves regarding the ways in which research efforts are shaped and staged around the binaries, contradictions, and paradoxes that form our own lives. We must question our selves, too, regarding how those binaries and paradoxes shape not only the identities called forth in the field and later in the discovery processes of writing, but also our interactions with respondents, in who we become to them in the process of *becoming* to ourselves (p. 183-184).

In order to become aware of the self in the process of research, I began with my own assumptions, groundings, and experiences; those directly inform how I view my research subjects, the information I deem valuable, and what I chose to include and exclude. Therefore, I started with my whiteness (Hesse-Biber, 2006; Mehan and Wood, 1975; Adler and Adler, 2008). As Hatch (2002) contends, "in qualitative work, it is understood that the act of studying a social phenomenon influences the enactment of that phenomenon. Researchers are a part of the world they study; the knower and the known are taken to be inseparable" (p. 10). If I am to be a part of the world of immigrant students as well as continue to study the narrative and language use employed to describe them, I must continue to work to discover how my whiteness might affect my research, and how the categories of race, class, and gender coalesce and influence the research process; how can they not as they are part of how we define ourselves? This recognition, however, complicates the insider/outsider positionality of the researcher as the researcher ventures into relationships across difference. Therefore, "assuming commonality based on a single dimension of identity is detrimental to the project of deconstructing power relations and co-constructing knowledge" (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2006, p. 499-500). If we are to be inseparable, I had to be cognizant of any damage that my positionality might

have done. I have tried to acknowledge this throughout my findings here. My whiteness is an important facet, but I must be aware of other dimensions of reality and work to be continuously reflexive throughout.

Further, Hatch (2002) argues that “qualitative research is as interested in inner states as outer expressions of human activity. Because these inner states are not directly observable, qualitative researchers must rely on subjective judgments to bring them to light” (p. 11). If my subjective judgments bring information to light, then my subjectivity and positionality had to be explicit and I continue to question my very presence as a white, educated, U.S. citizen. That subjectivity directly informed the information I highlight and the choices I made within this research. Thus I had to realize that, at its very core, Whiteness is

intimately linked to the subordination and oppression of people of color (...) [and] because Whites are privileged, and members of other races are disadvantaged, racism is essentially about power. One group—in this case, Whites—creates hegemonic ideological and discursive norms that position them as superior to another group—in this case, people of color. Racism relies on institutional power and the mask of normalcy to subordinate people of color (Hyland, 2005, p. 431).

I am white, therefore I am privileged. I am a graduate student in a university working toward a doctoral degree. In that statement alone, I have several privileges: whiteness, class, and education. However, to complicate this privilege, I must also acknowledge that I am gendered female, I adhere to non-positivist ideologies, and have lived most of my life as a member of the lower class. The power that I have that comes with whiteness is made complex by these non-privileged social markers, and worked to assist me in

interrogating my privilege and awareness of my positionality within this research context. As I went about researching the lived experiences of immigrant students, I had to consistently be aware of the sheer power I hold and am granted in my relationship with an institutional power (a university and U.S. citizenship). I was faced with having to ask if my very choice of research topics created hegemonic and ideological norms that position, reify and reinforce my superiority over this group, these norms that get reinforced on a daily basis. Has my research done more harm than good? Is it even possible to negotiate my way through this research as a white woman? The answer here is complicated, and a combination of yes and no. While it was noble for me to prepare for this possibility, awareness was not enough.

Audrey Thompson (2003) argues that writing about whiteness serves white benefit; we get credit for acknowledging and interrogating our whiteness. This, of course, serves our privilege and we re-establish our post at the center. What interrogating my whiteness must also involve, however, is an awareness of centering myself in relation to an exotic “other,” that other being immigrant students. I am highlighting and continue to highlight my difference and thus my privilege in relation to my research subject. However, what I must realize is that what is also working in my whiteness is an assumption of normalcy, that which “should” be instead of what is. I must be careful to continue to acknowledge this if I continue to study how narratives about immigrants get told in news media in future research. The very choices made concerning language and representation I would argue have their basis in racism and white privilege. Specific to

immigrant representations as well is the notion of what it means to be a U.S. citizen, which at its core is an assumption of Whiteness, or more specifically, Euro-centrism. This is underscored in Hyland (2005) as she argues “sometimes racism is inserted into schools simply by doing what is normal in those schools that primarily serve students of color, or even doing what is seemingly wonderful for students. How teachers identify themselves as teachers can function to sustain or disrupt the institutional and societal racism that lives in the practices of U.S. schools” (p. 432). How I identified myself as a researcher can function to sustain or disrupt both institutional and societal racism that lives in the lives of these immigrant students.

Furthermore, within this research I worked to move beyond what Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) call “ ‘racial progressives’ who recognized and problematized relations of ruling even though they tended to benefit from the power structure” (Myers, 2003, p. 131). Additionally, I attempted to realize that I must not use these students whom I research as a way to move beyond being a racial progressive but instead, to focus on what their lived experiences are and how I might work to lend my voice in a chorus of voices to tell the hard truth, even if that truth might work to take away my privilege as a white person; not only must I give that privilege up, I had to be willing to. I worked to be aware that in the narratives that I created through my own writing and research that I did not “caricature and dehumanize the ‘others,’ turning them into contaminants to be avoided or eliminated” (Myers, 2003, p. 132). As I analyzed and unpacked the news media language and narratives surrounding immigrant lived experience, I needed to be

aware of the racism imbedded within so that I do not simply spit it back out to cause additional harm and be used against my students. I realize that as a white woman, lending my privileged voice to students who have none is problematic in itself; thus I must take special care to make explicit my own beliefs and experiences and how those influence my choices concerning my framework and methods, which I am doing here. What I am worked toward then is what Hytten and Warren (2003) state as reasons to study whiteness:

We study whiteness and the discursive perpetuation of whiteness in education simply because we think it is the most ethical thing we can do in the classroom. If we come to see racism in our classes, it is our obligation as ethical and culturally implicated agents in the world to find ways of examining and resisting the dominating influence of whiteness. We do this work because, as Peggy McIntosh (1995) argues, now that we see whiteness functioning in our lives, we are 'newly accountable (p. 189) (p. 70).

It was my hope to engage in this obligation of examining and resisting the dominating influences of whiteness, despite my membership. I am accountable for the ways that my own whiteness functions in the lives of others, as well as how whiteness functions on an institutional level, like news media. It is my hope that through this research I was able to make others newly accountable as well while underscoring the lived experiences of Latino/a immigrant students that already exist.

Moreover, I also pull from feminism the concept of intersectionality. As Villaverde (2008) explains, "Feminist theory was rightly challenged to address more accurately the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation,

geography, language, ability, and a multitude of other social factors and roles,” and these intersections are in a constant state of play in our everyday identities. As the definition of intersectionality suggests, “the way sexism, racism, classism, ageism (and any –ism) intersect in lived experience, bringing awareness to the varying degrees of oppression in layered structures of power” (Villaverde, 2008, p.55). Within my research and uncovering the ways media construct immigrant narratives as well as the obstacles outlined in my research for immigrant and Latino/a youth are all intersectional and result from experiencing a multitude of –isms at any given moment. As Audre Lorde (1984) asserts, “as white women ignore their built-in privilege of whiteness and define woman in terms of their own experience alone, then women of Color become ‘other,’ the outsider whose experience and tradition is too ‘alien’ to comprehend” (p. 3). I worked to make my privilege explicit and problematize the direct creation of “alienness” used to describe Latino/a immigrants.

Critical Pedagogy and Media Literacy

Much of media theory developed from a Marxian critique of society; therefore, before we may understand the current function and relationship of news media to consumers like ourselves, we must first understand where media institutions first took root. I begin my argument with Jurgen Habermas’ notion of the public sphere introduced in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, (1991) which addressed the question, how has media changed the character of public opinion during modernity? It is the notion of the public sphere and its demise as a result of capitalism that begins to

situate news media and consumers. In Habermas' definition, the public sphere is a group of middle class intellectuals "that helped to supplant medieval aristocracies and served an important political function in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (Laughey, 2007, p.48). They met at coffee shops or clubs, treated all participants judiciously, discussed issues rarely focused on by the rich and middle class white participants engaged in dialogue about their political concerns. However, "the decline of the bourgeois public sphere was partly due to the rise of mass media along with wider trends in the concentration of economic capital. Newspaper presses merged and bought out one another, combining their economic and technological prowess to reinforce and strengthen their market share" (Laughey, 2007, p.49). For Habermas, the swing toward an advanced capitalist society forced the public sphere (which included middle class folks such as academics and shopkeepers but did not include the powerful nobility, whom they often questioned) to transition from a culture-debating group of intellectuals to a culture-consuming group of buyers. "Rational-critical debate had a tendency to be replaced by consumption, and the web of public communication unraveled into acts of individuated reception" (Habermas, 1991, p.161). In other words, media and consumerism affected the public's participation in social and political activities, as Habermas stated "The world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only," (Laughey, 2007, p.49). In other words, information concerning the lives of citizens began to be wrapped up in the production and consumption of mass media. Instead of having meaningful and critical dialogue to discuss issues concerning the lives of the people, participants were

concerned with what they were purchasing and what they were able to access. The media only perpetuated an appearance of social critique. The political economy affects fiscal structures that affect media; thus we must interrogate how these structures exert themselves on media; what gets told and who tells it? The media here then begin to have a clear tie to politics and economics; instead of being solely a function independent of government influence to hold it accountable, it became a new function of buying power.

In relation to the media operating as a function of economics, Theodor Adorno (1973) introduced the concept of the culture industry, that which is produced as a commodity within a capitalist entertainment industry. The media, as Habermas (1991) suggested, has become such an industry; to support Habermas' idea that capitalism has stunted political discourse, Adorno argues that "the consumers are the workers and the employees, the farmers and the lower middle class. Capitalist production so confines them, body and soul, that they fall helpless victims to what is offered them" (1973, p.133). Consumers are forced to accept the culture industry and the products it produces.

Further, Adorno (2002) argues that the industry harbors ulterior motives to keep the masses repressed and submit them to inactivity. This culture industry, then, is owned by capitalist upper classes that are in control and share their ideologies to the popular consciousness. Media, particularly news media, operate within this political system, operating as corporations owned by conglomerates and moguls who diversify their assets from news media, to businesses, to real estate. As Chomsky (1988) states, "twenty-four media giants (or their controlling parent companies) make up the top tier of media

companies in the United States (...) and these twenty-four companies are large, profit-seeking corporations, owned and controlled by quite wealthy people” (p.5). Chomsky’s idea relates to Adorno’s standardization, which essentially argues that the masses become the commodities they use. The needs of consumers are therefore controlled and mediated by capitalism, both inside and outside of work. However, I do not entirely agree with Adorno’s idea that we are only “helpless victims” as Marxist critiques of capitalism would suggest; I do want to tease out and highlight this notion of capitalism and ownership of news media enterprises, underlining media’s relationship to the larger sphere of economics and politics. Knowing this connection between the media and our political system begins to emphasize the first step of the process of how media influences its consumers and impacts the decisions we make. As Giroux (2002) argues, “the potency and power of the movie industry can be seen in its powerful influence upon the popular imagination and public consciousness. Unlike ordinary consumer items, film produces images, ideas and ideologies that shape both individual and national identities” (p. 6). Media itself is not a neutral entity but instead has ideological, political and economic ties which influences what gets shown, what and how news is told and who tells it.

Within the ideological intention of the media to affect and persuade the masses is Gramsci’s (1971) notion of hegemony, which argues that members of a society are allowed to dissent and oppose, but this dissention is really regulated by dominant elites. We give permission to be duped because we can’t see the emperor has no clothes.ⁱ Related to Chomsky’s notion of propaganda, the news, because it is an extension of a

political economy working toward a consumption based model (as a function of capitalism), works not to just inform or entertain, but rather to serve these ‘hegemonic forces,’ creating a product that works to “manufacture consent.” In other words, those in power labor to subtly gain approval to serve the dominant ideologies that run the news media. As Chomsky states,

Another structural relationship of importance is the media companies’ dependence on and ties with the government. The radio-TV companies and networks all require government licenses and franchises and are thus potentially subject to government control or harassment. This technical legal dependency has been used as a club to discipline the media, and media policies that stray too often from an establishment orientation could activate this threat. The media protect themselves from this contingency by lobbying and other political expenditures, the cultivation of political relationships, and care in policy. The political ties of the media have been impressive (Chomsky, 1988, p.13).

The media’s ties then are not neutral; they are directly linked with government, thus dependent on the government to operate. Media outlets are also susceptible to government regulation and rule. The news media function as an ideological vehicle for government ideology that was supposed to be independent of government forces; instead, they are now operating within the Capitalist economy that drives government decisions.

Thus, media serves as an educator, constructed and operating within a system of specific representation and ideologies. So, using media as a source of education and curriculum without critical media literacy is dangerous to the individual as well as to their participation in a democratic space. However, what does critical media literacy mean, why is it necessary, and how does it relate and affect Latino/a immigrant students?

Students and teachers engage with media that is likely a disproportionate representation in their lives. Immigrant students may use media as a cultural currency to negotiate a new identity in order to gain cultural capital, “ways of talking, acting, modes of style, moving, socializing, forms of knowledge, language practices, and values” (McLaren, 2002, p.93). Further, this isn’t necessarily true just for immigrant students, but for educators as well: learning how to be, act, and engage in educator-like practices like their peers, as well as the social expectations of whom they are and what they should be is also prevalent. This investment in gaining cultural capital through media becomes problematic since media is socially constructed; “the power here is an ideological power: the power to signify events in a particular way” (Gurjevitch, 1982, p. 69). In other words, media is neither objective nor politically vacant of ideologies and constructs. Because media is socially constructed and operates within a system of specific representations and ideologies, using media as a source of education and curriculum without critical media literacy is dangerous to the individual as well as to their participation in a democratic space.

To further establish a need for critical literacy, particularly for Latino/a immigrant students and those that educate them, is the danger of media serving as a type of cultural imperialism, in which

the dominant cultural group exercises its power by bringing other groups under the measure of its domination (...) the dominant groups construct the differences of subordinate groups as lack and negation in relation to their privileging norms (...) victims of cultural imperialism live their oppression by viewing themselves from the perspective of the way others view them: a phenomenon known as ‘double consciousness’ (McLaren, 2002, p. 37).

If media serves “the interests of elites who control hegemonic institutions” then absorbing inaccurate media representations of immigrants serves to distort a student’s self-image, self-worth, and ability to exercise Paulo Freire’s notion of a critical consciousness. This is further compromised through the interaction and relationship with their educators, who may operate on these troubling and simplified representations of who these students are and what they’re capable of accomplishing and contributing. Because of the dialectical nature of media as a curriculum for immigrant students while also a vehicle for ideology and imperialism, it is my contention that critical media literacy coupled with a critical pedagogy for both teachers of and immigrant students, can lead to the development of a social and critical consciousness known as conscientization, or, “the process by which students, as empowered subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities that shape their lives and discover their own capacities to re-create them (...) the actual lived experiences cannot be ignored or relegated to the periphery in the process of coming to know” (Darder, Baltodano and Torres, 2002, p.15). It is the work of the teacher to assist students, all students, in learning to be empowered subjects, and develop a sense of awareness in the process of coming to know who they are, how they can contribute, and how their identities are constructed and distorted.

Culture of Power and Critical Media Literacy

According to Lisa Delpit (2006), there is a culture of power being enacted within classrooms. This concept originated from miscommunication between white educators and those who identify as educators who are also people of color. The miscommunication

originated through a debate between these teachers on the best way to teach reading and writing skills to students of color. Delpit does not address issues of methodology but rather argues that the common thread in these discussions had to do with what she terms a “culture of power.” The culture of power, according to Delpit, in her words, includes the following aspects: 1) issues of power are enacted in classrooms; 2) there are codes of or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a ‘culture of power.’ 3) The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power; 4) If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier; 5) Those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge---its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence (p.24). Delpit (2006) argues that 1) issues of power that are enacted in classrooms through the power teachers have over students, textbook publishers who make decisions about what is included and excluded, the power of the state making decisions about education and an individual or group that determines who is “intelligent” or “smart.” Perhaps the most important section of first criteria is the connection between schools and economic success. Delpit (2006) states, “if schooling prepares people for jobs, and the kind of job a person has determines her or his economic status and, therefore power, then schooling is intimately related to that power” (p.25). In aspect two, there are rules that regulate “ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting,” (p.25). In aspect three, success in schools is contingent on adopting the culture of those who have power: this means that those who

are white and middle class have an easier time adapting to what schools want and expect of their students because that system is what schools are based on. In aspect four, learning the rules makes adapting to the culture of power much easier; and in aspect five, those in power are less willing to acknowledge that they are part of a culture of power, and those that aren't see power explicitly and frequently.

This culture of power relates to news media and its effects on Latino/a students in education. If media serves the interests of those in power through hegemony, then media is a part of the culture of power as it relates to narratives and rhetoric around Latino/a immigrants and students. If racist and reductionist media narratives are leaking into the classroom through teachers, texts, state policies, and those in power, then in what ways do Latino/a students have to combat this since they are not members of the culture of power? Arguably media informs and regulates the rules for those who belong to a group who hold power, namely white documented U.S. citizens; those who do not fit this description do not have any power; therefore, how might they affect any change or access to education from their vantage point? These rules are a construction of specific policies, practices and beliefs that are based on what an American is and should be, and who fits that demographic. Additionally, if media is constructing specific narratives and language used to describe Latino/a immigrants, those narratives get disseminated and spread to those who do hold power. Once it reaches these members, it can be enmeshed in subtle and cloaked ways to communicate specific type of racist knowledge about who Latino/a immigrants are, why they immigrate to the United States, and how their integration

affects U.S. policies and population. As James Baldwin wrote “no one is white before he/she came to America;” Allan Johnson (2005) explains what Baldwin meant, stating that most of what we experience as reality is a cultural creation. It is made up even though people may not necessarily recognize it as such (p. 17). Beverly Tatum (2000) echoes this sentiment indirectly as she writes about identity development, emphasizing “the parts of our identity that do capture our attention are those that other people notice, and that reflect back to us,” (p.11). What we recognize as reality helps to create this reflection of others in ourselves; however, we know that it can be deceptive and inaccurate, largely defined by dominant culture and hegemonic definitions of those as part of “the culture of power.” Therefore, developing a critical pedagogy and media literacy involves perceiving and understanding how these aspects of our identity and the identity of others is created through representations that we engage with daily; it attempts to “teach students to read, analyse, and decode media texts” (Kellner and Share, 2005, p.372). In essence, critical pedagogy and media literacy work as decoder rings for dominant culture. This become critically important if we are to at the very least expose the ways power is enacted and enforced within schools and educational spaces, as Delpit (2006) suggests.

Moreover, to be critical means to “see beyond” while critical pedagogy “is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relationships of the wider community, society, and nation state”

(McLaren, qtd. in Wink, 2004, p.26). In other words, it looks for the why as well as the what. In order to be critical, it is necessary to also be literate; As Freire and Macedo (1987) state,

Literacy is best understood as a myriad of discursive forms and cultural competencies that construct and make available the various relations and experiences that exist between learners and the world (...) as a reference for critique, literacy provides an essential precondition for organizing and understanding the socially constructed nature of subjectivity and experience and for assessing how knowledge, power, and social practice can be collectively forged in the service of making decisions instrumental to a democratic society rather than merely consenting to the wishes of the rich and the powerful (p.10-11).

In order to have personal and political agency, media literacy, or the ability to decode dominant narratives that create realities and representation concerning Latina/os, is imperative for increased agency in the Latino/a community if Latino/as are going to be transformative agents and democratic participants; in addition, it is also pertinent to establish a critical literacy for educators as well in order for us to decode and understand how media is influencing and contributing to how we view issues of immigration, immigrant students, and our own positionality in relation. Quite simply, if we are going to espouse our nation as democratic, then we must have authentic participation and representation by all members of society, not just those we deem important. Literacy and reading these texts does not “consist merely of decoding the written word or language; rather, it is preceded by and intertwined with knowledge of the world. Language and reality are dynamically interconnected. The understanding attained by critical reading of

a text implies perceiving the relationship between text and context” (Freire and Macedo, 1987, p.29). Literacy helps us to make sense of our world; coupled with media literacy, it helps us to also make sense of what we see around us, and what lessons are taught through representation and repetition both for minority students and for the dominant culture.

To further explicate the necessity of literacy and critical pedagogy is the notion of a hidden curriculum, which McLaren (1998) defines as “the pedagogical unsaid (...) covert and insidious, and only a critical lens will bring it into view. It teaches what is assumed to be important. It defines the standard for the dominant culture” (Wink, 2004, p.46). Media representation functions as a hidden curriculum, and as caricatures of Latinos dominate media, what is slipping through into the consciousness of young people in their absorption of dominant culture’s representation of them? This question was explored in Children Now’s national survey of 1,200 adolescents where they asked them to describe how characters of different racial and ethnic backgrounds were portrayed on television. The study included 300 Latinos; “the adolescents were more likely to associate positive characteristics (e.g., being well educated, intelligent) with European American characters on television and to associate negative characteristics (e.g., being lazy, breaking the law) with minority characters” (Rivadeneyra, 2006, p.396). Through this hidden or sub-textual curriculum, society is domesticating students into the dominant view of themselves and ‘others.’ Therefore, a critical literacy can help to peel away the layers of ideology and stereotypes working to fix themselves into a stagnant meaning.

Through this, the hope is that a critical consciousness is possible. As Kellner and Share (2005) rightly assert,

When groups often under-represented or misrepresented in the media become investigators of their representations and creators of their own meanings the learning process becomes an empowering expression of voice and democratic transformation. Thus, critical media literacy can promote multicultural literacy, conceived as understanding and engaging the heterogeneity of cultures and subcultures that constitute an increasingly global and multicultural world. Critical media literacy not only teaches students to learn from media, to resist media manipulation, and to use media materials in constructive ways, but is also concerned with developing skills that will help create good citizens and that will make individuals more motivated and competent participants in social life (p.372).

To be participants in democratic processes and transformation is to be recognized as social and human agents, as Kellner and Share suggest. The people who do this often times are educators or members of a school system. In addition to equipping Latino/a immigrant students with the skills to be participatory in a democratic space, we must also do so as educators, not just ourselves but also those we work with, administrators and others who assist, educate, and participate in the everyday lives of these students. We must help to combat the misinformation of the permanent immigrant, as well as the humanly void description of “illegal alien.” As students learn the skills of media construction, these instruments can be used for social change and a socially critical consciousness. As educators, we too can interrogate and deconstruct that which

constructs us on a daily basis and be cognizant of how the power of the word, meaning, and representation affect the decisions we make as we employ pedagogical practices.

John Dewey (1997) argued that education is necessary to enable people to participate in democracy, “for without an educated, informed, and literate citizenry, strong democracy is impossible. Moreover, there are crucial links between literacy, democracy, empowerment, and social participation in politics and everyday life” (Kellner and Share, 2005, p.382). Therefore, without the development of a critical media literacy and pedagogy, the discrepancy between the dominant culture and the ‘other’ will continue to grow, arguably rooting the West’s superiority, as Kincheloe (2004) argues, more deeply into the global consciousness, society and culture (p. 70). We must allow students to build upon what they are likely to already be critical of; to negotiate meanings and representations in order to combat the fixed meanings and stagnant stereotypes. In order for the voice of the people to be created and heard, that voice must recognize the misrepresentations of current media in order to establish an alternative; we must work, and this is urgent for immigrant students particularly, to dismantle the current constructions and representations so that a new diversity of voices, viewpoints and ideas may be heard. Without what Freire terms as conscientization, these students cannot enter into the national and global dialogue, because they cannot recognize the misinformation at play. I do not mean to imply that Latino/a immigrant students are ignorant of their experiences and representations within media; it is my proposal that we build upon what is already a critical stance these students have and provide access to a language and

pedagogy that helps to build upon their knowledge. Also, we must recognize the ways we as educators, particularly those in power positions of whiteness and authority work to keep these students subjugated, both intentionally and unintentionally. Alternative voices and representations are a necessity in a democracy; otherwise, the binary of the haves and have-nots will always be at play. As Giroux (1987) argues, “literacy is not approached as merely a technical skill to be acquired, but as a necessary foundation for cultural action for freedom, a central aspect for what it means to be a self and socially constituted agent” (p. 7). Critical media literacy and pedagogy can equip students and teachers with skills that are needed to uncover injustice and inequality; they can then become human subjects instead of just media stereotypes and sound bites and begin to tear down the label of ‘other’ on themselves and other minority groups, as well as educators participating in this process. This calls for a reciprocal relationship where both parties can enter into the discussion and begin to create a better society. They can begin to see the water in which they swim.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I review the literature that explores how media represents immigrants and Latino/a peoples. In my literature review, I begin with describing current immigration policies that began in 2010 in Arizona which are representative of the national discussion surrounding immigration, and how immigration, it seems, is another way to discuss members of the Latino/a population and then lead into the history of media. I then begin to situate the importance of Latino/a representation in media and how media contributes to the construction of identity and its specific relationship to Latino/a peoples analyzing concepts by theorists Stuart Hall, Douglas Kellner, Sut Jhally, as well as Paulo Freire. Next, I review how media represents and constructs narratives about Latino/a culture. Finally, I analyze the concept of Critical Pedagogy as it relates to literacy.

Literature Review

In May 2010, the Obama administration granted temporary legal status to Haitians living in the United States due to the earthquake devastation on the island of Haiti in early 2010. The administration's goal was to keep Haitians without criminal records in

the country and work to send money home to assist affected relatives. The program allowed any Haitian living in the United States on January 12, 2011 an opportunity to live and work legally in the U.S. for eighteen months. With the unfortunate experience of a distressing earthquake, undocumented Haitian residents were deemed documented citizens, no longer bearing the ill-stated signifier “illegal immigrant” or “illegal alien.” While there is no official government “label” for those living here without documentation, frequently in documents those living in U.S. borders without documentation are often referred to as “illegal immigrants” as the chosen moniker. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services division stated that all applications for documentation would be met with a “generosity of spirit” due to the humanitarian crisis created by the earthquake. However, had this humanitarian crisis never occurred, non-documented Haitian citizens would still be categorized as “illegal” and the deportation process would still be in effect. Yet, the U.S. also recognized a pending influx of Haitian immigrants as a result of the devastation and difficulty of rebuilding.

At first glance, the U.S. did a nice deed; if we look further, however, we realize the U.S. worked to protect its resources and acknowledge Haiti’s inability to accommodate deported Haitians; with U.S. interests clearly involved, how does this assistance construct our reputation to the rest of the world? It’s no secret that the U.S. is not very popular since the war on terrorism began in 2003, specifically whether or not Saudi Arabia had weapons of mass destruction, to our frequent killing of innocent civilians in the Middle East, to still having a military presence spread across the Middle

East in 2014, over ten years later. However, more important is that the U.S. is able to define who is “illegal” and who is not. While this discussion is had about multiple immigrant populations, from those who emigrate from the Middle East to this particular example about Haitians, the issue is that immigration is tied to people of color and to those individuals who are not accepted as “American.” The focus recently has increased for Latino/a people as immigration discussions are focused on this particular population within the last six years specifically. The focus on Latino/as is evident in the laws passed in Arizona beginning in 2010 concerning undocumented residents, with the introduction of SB 1070, also known as the Support our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act. It required all undocumented residents over age 14 to register with the U.S. government if they stay longer than 30 days and carry this documentation with them at all times. Additionally, any law enforcement officer may attempt to establish a resident’s immigration status during a lawful stop or arrest when there is reasonable suspicion the individual is without documentation. Following quickly on the heels of SB 1070 Arizona then introduced the controversial “anchor baby” law, attempting to make any children born to two undocumented residents prohibited from becoming an automatic naturalized U.S. citizen. Two senators have followed suit, proposing a constitutional amendment for the same thing. As of July 2013 Representative Steve King of Iowa and Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky are pursuing what is now called “The Birthright Citizenship Bill” to amend section 301 of The Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify whether children

born in the U.S. are born to U.S. citizens or parents who are not documented citizens of the United States.

What is interesting here is the arbitrary way these labels and laws get defined and mandated depending on context. According to an article appearing on Businessweek.com, the U.S. follows the legal tradition of *jus soli*, or right of the soil to determine who gains citizenship. If a person is born on U.S. soil he/she is a citizen. However, numerous debates have emerged arguing for an amendment to the Constitution to be based on *jus sanguine*, or right of blood; if one's parents are Americans, then so are their children. With a natural disaster or a supposed increase in crimes committed by undocumented residents the terms and conditions fluctuate and are contingent on U.S. interests and available resources. The day before the earthquake, Haitian immigrants were 'illegal'. The day after, however, they are now separated from this label and are given legal status. What this illustrates is the power the U.S. and its leaders hold both in government and media to construct definitions and representations of particular groups of people. The U.S. government redefined Haitian citizens within the discourse surrounding immigration as well as the status of Latino/a undocumented citizens in Arizona and potentially, in the rest of this country. As Fiske (1996) notes,

Discourse, then, is language in social use; language accented with its history of domination, subordination, and resistance; language marked by the social conditions of its use and its users; it is politicized, power-blaring language employed to extend or defend the interests of its discursive community (p. 3).

The discursive community in this context is the United States; while the U.S. did recognize the humanitarian need of the Haitian community, it also recognized the potential influx of refugees from Haiti seeking aid and the pressure this would put on U.S. interests; arguably U.S. interests, from the point of view of the U.S. government, are more important. This is also exemplified in SB 1070 in Arizona as well as in the discussion of who gets the coveted label of “American citizen” and who does not, despite being physically born on U.S. soil. Thus, the construction of the term ‘immigrant,’ who’s included, excluded and how that changes depending on context is extremely important if we are to explore the relationship between representation of Latino/a immigrants to how those representations affect Latino/a and immigrant students and population. As social justice educators, we must recognize that “to make sense of the world is to exert power over it, and to circulate that sense socially is to exert power over those who use that sense as a way of coping with their daily lives” (Fiske, 1996, p. 3). Latino/a people are also labeled and grouped as ‘immigrant’ and always attached to the word ‘illegal’ or ‘alien;’ this group is constructed through a specific discourse used to ‘control, restrain, minimize and even destroy social and therefore discursive differences” (Fiske, 1996, p. 4). These terms are reserved for the Latino/a population specifically. We do not see a conflation of immigrant with Muslims, Canadians, or other groups who emigrate to the United States on a regular basis. We see this conflation specifically for Latino/as, and because of the severe focus on this particular group, legislation around specific brown skin people is necessary to interrogate, especially if this population is increasing in the United States

and within our schools. Thus, the power of representation and language are significant with how we interact and engage specifically with Latino/a students on a daily basis within educational spaces.

Media Representation

According to Hall (1997) representation connects meaning and culture and uses language to say something meaningful to the world and others (p. 15). Traditionally, representation in media, or images that we see that depict what's happening in the world, held the belief that these images either offered the audience an accurate or distorted view or reflection of reality but it was reality nonetheless. To represent means to depict, a notion of something that was there and then re-presented to the audience; it meant to stand in the place of; therefore, past media theory dealt with measuring the gap of the 'true' meaning to a 'distorted' meaning of reality. How closely did these media depictions come to portray what is 'real' or what 'really' happened? However, Hall (1997) subverts this, arguing that this was a too simplistic interpretation. This view assumes one fixed or stagnant meaning; instead, representation is constitutive, or meaning is created as the representation is created. Because of this, there is no one fixed or true meaning or interpretation. There is nothing fixed in the first place to actually re-present (Jhally in Hall, 1997). Meaning then, is contingent on what we, the creators, read into, see and understand as well as what it was originally intended or created to be.

In the first place, then, meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thoughts which can stand for or 'represent' the world, enabling us

to refer to things both inside and outside our heads (...) we have called this a 'system of representation.' (...) It consists, not of individual concepts, but of different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations between them (...) meaning depends on the relationship between things in the world—people, objects and events, real or fictional(...) we are able to communicate because we share broadly the same conceptual maps and thus make sense of or interpret the world in roughly similar ways (...) we must also be able to represent or exchange meanings and concepts, and we can only do that when we also have access to a shared language (Hall, 1997, p. 18).

In other words, as we communicate, we picture something in our mind and relate it or compare it to something else in order to define it. We all share an understanding of concepts, both concrete and abstract, that we have labeled and represent as mental images and translate those into a shared language; this allows us, through representation, to communicate and create meaning about the world around us. Thus, meaning does not exist until it is represented within language or image; representation does not occur after an event, but rather in the constitution or creation of it; it is one of the conditions of the event's existence (Jhally, Hall, 1997). To do this, we must share a culture, the ability to organize or classify the world. We must have a shared understanding of these classifications, like race, gender, class, in our society, which is learned in order to think about objects that are not directly in front of us. Further, in order to share the sense and classification each of us engages in, we must then have a language to communicate these concepts to others. Language externalizes the meanings we make of the world and is accessible as a social process. This is where representation begins to take place (Jhally, Hall, 1997).

If language allows us to communicate meaning, this meaning, for Hall (1997), “is not in the object to person or thing, nor is it in the word. It is we, who fix the meaning so firmly that, after a while, it comes to seem natural and inevitable. The meaning is constructed by the system of representation” (p. 21). Within this construction of meaning are codes, that which tells us what concepts are being referred to when we hear or read or see specific signs, or the words and images used to convey meaning. Codes tell us the ideas imbedded in the word. The idea is that meaning is not innate within a word or images, but it is constructed and produced, a result of “a signifying practice—a practice that produces meaning, that makes things mean,” (Hall, 1997, p. 24). Codes attach specific words with specific meaning and translate our concepts into a language, thus allowing us to communicate.

Further, these codes are established, or carry meaning, based on the difference between specific signs, or words/concepts, or, it is the difference between these that signifies a specific meaning. In other words, going back to Hall (1997) “Signs themselves cannot fix meaning, meaning depends on the relation between a sign and a concept which is fixed by a code. Meaning is relational,” (“Representations,” p.27). As a result, it is language that leads to representation.

In order to understand the codes that operate between signs, we must also understand the concept of signification, and how meaning is embedded in language. For Saussure, language is a system of signs; a sign is made up of the signifier, the form, and the signified, the concept triggered in the recognition of the sign. “Both are required to

produce meaning but it is the relation between them, fixed by our cultural and linguistic codes, which sustains representation,” (Hall, 1997, “Representation,” p.31). Since signs do not possess a fixed meaning, the meaning of a word is often defined in relation to its opposite; further, the relationship between the signifier and signified, compacted by our cultural codes, is not permanently set. Words shift meanings, and concepts may also change depending on historical or political context. As we talk about certain concepts in certain ways, other meanings are being excluded (Hall, 1997, “Representations,” p.45).

Therefore, signs can never be truly fixed. As Hall (1997) asserts,

They can never be finally fixed but are always subject to change, both from one cultural context and from one period to another. There is thus no single, unchanging, universal ‘true meaning.’ This opens up meaning and representation, in a radical way, to history and change (...) The important point is the way this approach to language unfixes meaning, breaking any natural and inevitable tie between signifier and signified. This opens representation to the constant ‘play’ or slippage of meaning, to the constant production of new meanings, new interpretations, (“Representations, p.32).

What Hall is exploring here is the Semiotic approach, the idea that words also encompass objects and activities, behavior, and cultural practices. These are read like a language, and meaning is communicated based on analysis of sign, signifier and signified. Within this new ability to read objects and cultural practices comes the notion of exploiting difference, where signs create meaning by juxtaposing a difference between them. Therefore concepts and cultural themes can be applied and linked to wider, multiple meanings. Introduced by Barthes, these are the notions of denotation and connotation (Hall, 1997, “Representations,” p.38).

Denotation is the simple, descriptive level where most would agree on the meaning of a sign (i.e. a table or chair). The second level, however, is called connotation, linking the signifier to wider themes and meanings in our culture. The connotative level links to the wider realms of social ideology, our general beliefs and values in our society. This second level of meaning, Barthes refers to as myth. For example, in the term pig, the denotative meaning is an animal with specific characteristics. At the connotative level and depending on its context, the term “pig” has also come to mean a police officer, or a male chauvinist. Terms may be encoded or decoded to yield many different significations, and

Barthes does not make it clear why this second-order meaning, myth, is different from, rather than a special case of, connotation. We would like to suggest that the difference between myth and connotation depends on the amplitude of the lexicons from which the concepts are drawn. The connoted meaning in ‘pig=policeman’ and in ‘pig=male chauvinist’ are clearly linked to the lexicons of identifiable sub-groups. By contrast, myth seems identifiable with the lexicons of very large groups, if not of the society as a whole. Myth therefore differs from connotation at the moment at which it attempts to universalize for the whole society meanings which are special to particular lexicons. In the process of universalization, these meanings, which in the last instance are particular to certain lexicons, assume the amplitude of reality itself and are therefore ‘naturalized.’ Thus, we might say, myths are connotations which have become *dominant-hegemonic* (Heck, 1980 p.125).

What is important here is that myths attempt to universalize the meanings encoded and decoded within specific signs, which in turn naturalizes them, becoming a representation of reality. Myths, as stated by Heck, are wider cultural and social meanings that have become dominant and hegemonic, or, appear to be reality but are ideological constructs.

For example, in advertising, they often times link signs to specific larger cultural meanings of patriotism, what it means to be an American, or what it means to be a man or woman. Further, Hall (1997) argues that it in these images and significations that the viewer is placed in a position of identification so that meaning, and myth, can be communicated. The images are only communicated through our relation to them, and we are implicated through this looking, or psychic and imaginary engagement with the images leads to our investment and involvement.

So what happens next? If signs are constantly on a sliding scale of meaning, then both the viewer and the speaker/writer are actively involved in the production of meaning. As Hall (1997) explains,

Discourses themselves construct the subject-positions from which they become meaningful and have effects. Individuals may differ as to their social class, gendered, 'racial,' and ethnic characteristics (among other factors), but they will not be able to take meaning until they have identified with those positions which the discourse constructs, *subjected* themselves to its rules, and hence become the *subjects of its power/knowledge* ("Representations, p.56).

What we as viewers take as meaning is never what was fully given by the speaker/writer, and thus, to have meaning, we must enter language, "where all sorts of older meanings which pre-date us, are already stored from previous eras, we can never cleanse language completely, screening out all the other, hidden meanings which might modify or distort what we want to say," (Hall, 1997, "Representations, p.33). The reader is just as important as the writer or speaker/creator. The act of encoding and decoding comes into play here. The sign that we are engaging is encoded with a particular meaning or

intention by the speaker/producer/creator of the sign, and we, as the viewer, must decode this meaning in order for it to be communicable.

The broadcasting structures must yield encoded messages in the form of a meaningful discourse. The institution-societal relations of production must pass under the discursive rules of language for its product to be 'realized.' This initiates a further differentiated moment, in which the formal rules of discourse and language are in dominance. Before this message can have an 'effect' (however defined), satisfy a 'need' or be put to a 'use,' it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this set of decoded meanings which 'have an effect,' influence, entertain, instruct, or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological, or behavioral consequences. In a 'determinate' moment the structure employs a code and yields a 'message': at another determinate moment the 'message,' via its decodings, issues into the structure of social practices. We are not fully aware that this re-entry into the practices of audience reception and 'use' cannot be understood in simple behavioural terms (Hall, 1980, p.53).

Or, for Hall, once the message is decoded, the meaning is inserted into social practice and cultural norms and thus indicates that meaning has potentially an infinitesimal number of interpretations; this is an important point here in terms of news media. Once they communicate a specific meaning, we decode its meaning, and often times, this meaning has hegemonic and dominant ideological pedigree. However, before we can build on this connection between representation and hegemony, we must first continue with the process of representation and signification so we may understand the process of how representation leads to a crack in democracy and the formation of new ideas. This idea is reinforced through Richard Dyer's (1993) statement on representation:

...How social groups are treated in cultural representation is part and parcel of how they are treated in life, that poverty, harassment, self-hate and discrimination (in housing, jobs, educational opportunity and so on) are shored up and instituted

by representation. The resonances of the term ‘representation’ suggest as much. How a group is represented, presented over again in cultural forms, how an image of a member of a group is taken as representative of that group, how that group is represented in the sense of spoken for and on behalf of (whether they represent, speak for themselves or not), these all have to do with how members of groups see themselves and others like themselves, how they see their place in society, their right to rights a society claims to ensure its citizens. Equally re-presentation, representativeness, representing have to do also with how others see members of a group and their place and rights, others who have the power to affect that place and those rights. How we are seen determines in part how we are treated; how we treat others is based on how we see them; such seeing comes from representation (p.1).

As Dyer states, the notion of how we see ourselves in society as well as our right to obtain and exercise rights in a society is contingent on how we see ourselves and others represented, as well as what cultural codes and meaning are imbedded and interpreted within the images. We make meaning based on these codes and shared meaning within our own particular cultures. “Cultural forms do not have single determinate meanings—people make sense of them in different ways, according to the cultural (including sub-cultural) codes available to them,” (Dyer, 1993, p.2).

Images constantly construct us through our fantasy relationship with them; we cannot stand outside images (Jhally, *Stuart Hall: Representation and the Media*). This is evidenced in news media, as they, in order to communicate with a general viewer, must create something recognizable as well as something relational in order to get the information across. Therefore, news media, like advertising, constructs myths that we have demonstrated are dominant-hegemonic and ideologically rooted. This is one of the most productive ways to see news, to think about it as a myth,

a standpoint that dissolves the distinction between entertainment and information (...) as a communication process, news can act like myth and folklore (...) as education, as a validation of culture, as wish fulfillment, and as a force for conformity (...) members of a culture learn values, definitions of right and wrong, and sometimes can experience vicarious thrills—not all through individual tales, but through a body of lore (...) myth does not necessarily reflect an objective reality, but builds a world of its own (...) news offers more than fact—it offers reassurance and familiarity in shared community experiences; it provides credible answers to baffling questions, and ready explanations of complex phenomena such as unemployment and inflation. (Bird and Dardenne, 1988, p.70).

For Bird and Dardenne, these experiences operate as a ritual activity, these myths, including the news, are created and acted on as reality, becoming a model for a culture to use as a measurement of behavior: what is good and bad, while simultaneously being used as a model for what is incorporated into the news as a myth, or story.

Furthermore, as news media acts as myth imbedded with specific ideologies, we begin to see how representation in news media, the signs that make up these myths, begin to influence our thought processes but more importantly how we come to interact with what we think of as ‘reality.’ These images and myths resemble and have the same characteristics of that which we think of as reality, but it is difficult to remember that these are in fact, representations of a reality, and there lies in this representation a construction, production, and communication of meaning, meaning that is myth and in fact, not real at all.

As these myths are constructed and produced, ideology of the producer and creator works to privilege particular meanings over others, as well as make decisions about what meaning gets encoded and what meaning gets left out. This can also be

known as framing, cropping in and out specific ideas and concepts within the images and language of the representation. Ideology, however, can often be cloaked within the sign and representation. The effect of cloaking ideology can

be attributed to ‘false consciousness’ or a will-to-cheat by the dominant classes, but to the necessary obscuring of social realities. In short, our ‘spontaneous perceptions’ which take off from the distorted level (where ‘surplus value’ is hidden) must, themselves, be distorted. There is, therefore, a level of ‘deep structure’, which is ‘invisible’ and ‘unconscious’, which continually structures our immediate conscious perceptions in this distorted way. This is why, in ideological analysis, we must go to the structuring level of messages—that is, to the level where the discourse is coded—not just to their surface forms (Heck, 1980, p.122).

In other words, it is not a conscious decision to imbue these representations with ideology, but rather, it is an unconscious act; if we are saturated by images and therefore ideologies, they cannot help but sink into our own creations and productions of knowledge, discourse, signs and representations. Meaning only comes through discourse and representation, and thus, we constantly construct meaning based on ideology. The concern is whose ideology is being communicated and how these encoded representations shape and possibly fix meaning and language into place instead of offering new interpretations. This is power. Power intervenes to attempt to fix particular meanings until it is naturalized. Stereotypes are instrumental in this fixing of meaning, and thus, our understanding of reality because, as Dyer (1993) contends,

One apprehends reality only through representations of reality, through texts, discourses, images; there is no such thing as unmediated access to reality. But

because one can see reality only through representation, it does not follow that one does not see reality at all. Partial-selective, incomplete, from a point of view—vision of something is not no vision of it whatsoever. The complex, shifting, business of re-presenting, reworking, recombining representations is in tension with the reality to which representations refer and which they affect. This is evident in three ways. Firstly, reality sets limits to what, barring idiosyncratic examples, humans can make it mean. Secondly, reality is always more extensive and complicated than any system of representation can possibly comprehend and we always sense that this is so—representation never ‘gets’ reality, which is why human history has produced so many different and changing ways of trying to get it. Thirdly, representations here and now have real consequences for real people, not just in the way they are treated as indicated above but in terms of the way representations delimit and enable what people can be in any given society (Dyer, 1993, p. 3).

Stereotypes act as shortcuts to this representation of reality; however, as a result, stereotypes begin to take the place of this ‘reality’ and hide the process of representation so we cannot tell that it has been produced; it begins to seem to be just what reality is (Hall, 1997,). For example, since Obama has been elected President, the visual representations of his person in news media have included racist depictions of him as an indigenous person indicating he is “savage” and “uncivilized” in relation to his healthcare reform proposals. Additionally, there have been images of him as a monkey, a chia pet, as well as racist comments made by former Illinois governor Rob Blagojevich who stated that he was blacker than Obama, implying that he grew up “poorer” and that being black is always synonymous with being poor, disadvantaged and ignorant. These images and quotes have a specific cultural meaning at the connotative level, communicating that he is not human, nor is he a representative of African Americans. Contrasted with focusing on his policies rather than his race, these representations imply a specific belief system

concerning persons of color. One takes away human agency while the other preserves it. It is in the interrogation then, of these representations, meanings, and significations that we must work toward, for as Hall (1997) argues, it is in “interrogating stereotypes that makes them uninhabitable and it destroys their naturalness and normality” (Jhally). What is at stake then, is the ability to interrogate, to come up with fresh knowledges, identities, and meaning—this is how symbolic power operates, by closing off our access to thinking, knowledge and how it’s being interpreted, encoded and decoded. These questions and understanding of critical media literacy is important when we begin to discuss what’s at stake specifically for immigrant children in the United States as they become educated and taught ideas, concepts, beliefs, values, and social behavior. What specifically is being taught to these children, not just through media, but also through those of us who consume it and may perpetuate it as educators through the pedagogical choices we make? How do we interact with and see these students? How we do or do not assist them in language learning, cultural acclimation and understanding, is influenced by what we consume as participators in media driven culture.

Media can contain multiple meanings, and the invisibility of construction does not make a reality, despite its depiction of the contrary. This reality is illusory and dangerous if we begin to base decisions and understandings of the world on these symbols. As we have seen,

The material of media culture is so polymorphous, multivalent, and polysemic that it necessitates sensitivity to different readings, interpretations, and perceptions of the complex images, scenes, narratives, meanings and messages of

media culture (...) yet we ought to also indicate how media culture can advance sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, and other forms of prejudice, as well as misinformation, problematic ideologies, and questionable values (Kellner and Share, 2005, p. 373).

As we, the viewers, engage with what is presented, we must locate a specific axis of identification with what we are seeing in order for us to identify the image itself and its meaning; in other words, the viewer is constructed through our relationship with the images that we invest in. We are caught and invested in the meaning of what is represented. Those in power attempt to fix the meaning of images and language in order to gain, keep, or perpetuate power. The possibility then, to dissect the complexities of media culture, lies in recognizing these constructions, despite the difficulty in doing so. Images have a wide range of meanings and there is no escape from the idea that meaning is interpretational; fixing meaning can never be guaranteed and it can always be unfixed. It can loosen and fray, and this relative openness makes change possible (Jhally, 1997). To further this hope and to engage in deconstructing meanings, we must work to contest these fixed meanings and stereotypes to gain a critical consciousness only possible through media literacy and critical pedagogy;

critical pedagogy asks how and why knowledge gets constructed the way it does, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture while others clearly are not. Critical pedagogy asks how our everyday commonsense understanding—our social constructions or ‘subjectivities’—get produced and lived out (McLaren, 2002, p.72).

It is through what Freire and Macedo (1987) call reading the word and the world; establishing a literacy that can only be

emancipatory and critical to the extent that it is conducted in the language of the people. It is through the native language that students 'name their world' and begin to establish a dialectical relationship with the dominant class in the process of transforming the social and political structures that imprison them in their 'culture of silence.' Thus, a person is literate to the extent that he or she is able to use language for social and political reconstruction (p. 159).

It is through media literacy and questioning media through critical pedagogy that immigrant students have a chance at using their language for change or political reconstruction. Specifically, if one is aware of the stories being told around and about them, then it is possible to resist these narratives, and to gain the tools to deconstruct and uncover how these narratives are created, disseminated, and reproduced.

According to Allan Johnson (2005), "there is nothing inherently frightening about what we don't know. If we feel afraid, it isn't what we *don't* know that frightens us, it's what we *think* we *do* know" (p.13). What our culture in the United States thinks they know about the Latino/a population largely originates from general stereotypical representations of ethnic minority groups as a whole, since those members of minority groups are often undifferentiated between each other and instead, lumped into one "othered" group; "not only are ethnic minority groups often portrayed in negative ways through the media, they are often not portrayed at all, leaving the impression that these groups are not sufficiently important in our society (...) and concern has arisen over the influence that these stereotypic portrayals may have on minority youth" (Rivadeneyra, 2006, p.393). These stereotypes and representations specifically for immigrants that

(often the media fails to distinguish between Mexican immigrants and U.S. born Latinos) are “outsiders unable or unwilling to assimilate, as ‘welfare cheats’ draining society, or as people who do not pay taxes wresting jobs from citizens who do” (Vargas and DePyssler, 1998, p.409). Further, for many who live in a homogenous area with little exposure to lived experiences different from their own, the media is often the main source for information, based in “assumptions and sentiments about immigrants and their U.S.-born descendants. For immigrants, media portrayals constitute America’s evaluation of them and their immigrant experience. In describing the role of film as a social educator, Carlos E. Cortes writes that Hollywood movies offer ‘a kind of popular curriculum on immigration’” (Vargas and DePyssler, 1998, p.407). As one of the primary storytellers, the media images through all modes of representation conflate into stereotypes and soundbites, becoming shorthand to communicate quickly. (Vargas and DePyssler, 1998, p.408). Over time, it becomes like the steady drip of a faucet; these drips accumulate over time causing a general social belief about a group of people based on the only reference point available: media. (Fall Colors 2003-04: Prime Time Diversity Report). As these images accumulate, what meanings are communicated on a continual basis?

According to The National Council of La Raza, Latina/os are more likely than other groups “to receive portrayal in the media that reinforces crude and demeaning cultural stereotypes. Positive media portrayals of Latinos are also uncommon,” (Rodriguez, 1998, p.21). As the largest immigrant group since 1961, those who look of Latina/a descent are always “seen” or “perceived” as a permanent immigrant; this

enduring label is stitched into their skin and reinforced in media. According to Fall Colors (2003-04), Latina/o characters were four times more likely to portray domestic workers than other racial groups while overall, stories focusing on Latina/os and Latina/o-related issues has fluctuated between 1 and 3% (p.6). Additionally, when Latina/os do appear, they are more often shown in “affirmative action, immigration, welfare, crime and drug stories,” or the sexy/ exotic supporting role (Vargas and DePyssler, 1998, p.409). Further, as they appear in media, if they are not regulated to specific storylines, they are often background figures, victims, or occupy one of six Latino/a media stereotypes: the dark lady; Latin lover; female clown; male buffoon; half-breed harlot; or bandito. These are caricatures, which “reduce the diversity of a large social group to a few characteristics, as well as highlighting real class and/or race distinctions that exist among Latinos” (Vargas and DePyssler, 1998, p.410). So what are these depictions communicating to viewers? If “television is an important influence on youth, shaping their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior” then do these images also influence those in the educational fields? (Rivadeneyra, 2006, p.394). According to Espinosa (1997) qtd. in Rivadeneyra (2006), “a study conducted in 1997 indicated that Latinos made up only 2% of all characters in 139 prime-time shows. Latinos represented only 1% of all television families on prime-time television over a 10-year period” (p.394). In 2003-2004, Latinos made up about 6.5% on television (Children Now, 2004). This is in contrast to the current Latino/a population of the United States, of which 13% is Latino/a (Rivadeneyra, 2006, p.394). If we are to consider television and the important

influence it has on shaping knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and beliefs, then how might children receive these messages about their own ethnic group and what do they see in their teachers? Are these behaviors and messages the same? If so, then the student will be able to understand how they might be perceived inside the classroom and school which may affect their social identity and development as a student and learner. Further, as Rivadeneyra (2006) states, “watching these stereotypical portrayals was found to be related to poorer academic outcomes among Latino high school students” (p.395). Rivadeneyra (2006) also contends that based on the constructionist theory of media influences, it suggests that “individuals have varied reactions to the messages of the media and that these reactions lead people to be influenced by the same message in different ways” (p. 395). If this is the case, then how might different educators receive these messages?

Further, media, as communication, uses language and symbols to report the news and works as a product of the society and economy in which it resides. For example, news pundits read their news report as they show a clip of a highway chase, a school shooting, or the neighborhood animal adoption day. These reports, made up of language, can be analyzed through structuralism and semiotics, introduced by Saussure and Barthes; to support this notion of news as product is Jean Baudrillard who argues that language does not reflect reality but instead actually constructs it. Working within a system of signs (words) that form language, ideas are then signified and communicated. For example, during the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007 was described as a “massacre”

perpetrated by a young man named Seung Hui Cho. The focus during the media coverage was of his Asian background and his unstable mental status leading up to the shootings. By choosing to describe the events as a “massacre” while also focusing on his race and mental capacity, it creates a particular sense of understanding on the part of the shooter and his particular motivation for his actions. While his actions should be condemned, no one, similar to the Columbine shootings, asked what turmoil the shooter might have been experiencing in the time leading up to the incident. Thus, a particular reality is constructed about the shooter and the situation that occurred, often times using these isolated and rare events to create powerful laws concerning immigration, who’s allowed to attend universities, and responses to such events. The words used by news media create particular ways of looking at situations (choosing to use the word “massacre” instead of killings or shootings, which can evoke much stronger emotions to unify a people against a particular enemy) encoded with meanings of cultural significance since they are situated in political and economic structures.

The effects of exclusion, then, are troublesome if we realize that these depictions have existed in media for decades. This becomes even more problematic when we begin to examine how immigrant student’s social and personal identity is shaped by these images and stereotypes. According to Social Identity Theory, an individual’s identity

is inextricably bound to the fundamental characteristics of the social groups to which that person belongs. Consequently, when a specific social identity is salient, its characteristics provide a model of behavior cuing category-based distinctions. Thus, to sustain self-concept people are motivated to make ingroup-outgroup distinctions that are particularly advantageous for the ingroup. Early

studies by Sherif and Hovland (1961) and Ferguson and Kelley (1964) reveal that the simple existence of an outgroup is adequate to bring about intergroup behavior. Billig (1976) additionally indicates that people show significant ingroup favoritism, both when groups are formed based on valued dimensions and when they are derived along trivial dimensions; Notably, the comparative dimensions within these social categories may not be based in reality. Ideological belief structures may be constructed in the quest for positive self-identification. Hence, the potential for televised images to influence intergroup comparison is highly conceivable. This possibility may be markedly true when considering representations of race/ethnicity on TV as these images are oftentimes representative of White, mainstream norms that disparage minority cultures (Mastro, 2003, p.99-100).

In other words, our personal identity is linked to our social groups with which we identify; we begin to model our behavior based on our group's specific distinctions. If there is a described "other" different than a specific group, then that "other" will be treated differently from the rest of the group. This occurs whether the in-group was founded on valued or trivial reasons, either through shared commonalities or media representations largely based on stereotypes and misinformation. The portrayal of Latino/a cultures then is highly subject to othering, positioned outside of the American, white ideal. Therefore, "if Whites perceive Latinos to be predisposed to criminality, then televised depictions of such behaviors may reinforce this perception. These portrayals may create the perception that this stereotype is normative and is shared by others, and thus reinforce further a belief in the legitimacy of accentuation along this dimension" (Mastro, 2003, p.100). In the formation of identity then, this echoes Barth's notion of ethnic development and identification, in that he states

ethnicity evolves from a unison of socially ascribed designation and group self-identification. This process is not unlike many social theories that contend that the individual is shaped not only by how he or she perceives him-herself but by how others see him or her as well (Stonebanks, 2004, p.95).

According to Barth's perspective, ethnicity develops from both the group view of themselves as well as how outsiders view them. Within this media representation then, we construct ways of seeing this other, much like the way Kincheloe (2004) argues that the U.S. constructs the East concerning Islam and Muslims. He states, "Europeans have consistently positioned Muslims as the irrational, fanatic, sexually enticing and despotic others. This portrayal, as many scholars have argued, has been as much about Western anxieties, fears and self-doubts as about Islam" (p.1). These anxieties can be easily transferred over to the national discourse concerning immigration and the irrational fear or portrayal of Latino/a immigrants stealing jobs, leaching off American prosperity or bringing crime to the streets. Reminiscent of Johnson's (2005) assertion, we fear what we think we know. As Kincheloe (2004) continues to argue, the crux of these depictions "central to any description of this miseducation is the West's effort, especially after the Scientific Revolution of the 17th and 18th centuries, to depict its own superiority" (p.1). In order to depict this superiority, the West positions itself in relation to the immigrant other, a form of neocolonialism redolent of Edward Said's (1978) notion of Orientalism, a staple of Said's scholarship, pointed to a new understanding of

Colonialism and the historical construction of the Orient as an object of Western gaze, variously represented as alien, barbaric, uncivilized, sensual or exotic. Orientalism is best understood as a system of representations, a discourse framed

by political forces through which the West sought to understand and control its colonized populations. It is a discourse that both assumes and promotes a fundamental difference between the Western 'us' and Oriental 'them.' It is a manner of regularized interpreting, writing about, and accounting for the Orient, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases politically marshaled to self-justify imperial conquests and exploitation. In this sense the Orient is an imaged place that is articulated through an entire system of thought and scholarship (Rizvi and Lingard, 2006, p.296).

Much like the representations of the Latin lover, dark lady, half-breed harlot, or buffoon/bandito, these representations also occupy a space of "other," in which the West, in this case the United States, seeks to colonize and control Latino populations through ideological, political and hegemonic constructions. Further,

in Said's terms it [Orientalism] resides in the normative assumptions through which the Orient is seen as separate, eccentric, backward, silently different, sensual, and passive, which is always subject to supine malleability. The Orientals are variously represented as a fixed and unchanging other, lacking subjectivity or variation. Their capabilities and values are judged in terms of, and in comparison to, the West. They are the conquerable, the inferior, or those in need of Western guidance and patronage (Rizvi and Lingard, 2006, p.296).

In other words, the representations touched upon in this section work to depict Latino/a populations as separate, different and exotic; the other. The context of these representations is additionally complex given the fact that much of Western and Southwestern United States was Mexico, calling into question who really is an immigrant. The borders are blurred and political here. Who needs and wants the land, and who has the power to colonize? Additionally, there is heterogeneity of Latino/a immigrants, mostly from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Cuba and other

parts of Central and South America; the populations are made up of varied cultures and countries, but are lumped together as one othered group.

As Giroux (1987) argues, “difference is often constituted as deficiency and is part of the same logic that defines the other within the discourse of cultural deprivation” (p.3). Latino/a immigrants are portrayed as fixed and unchanging. Giroux’s notion couples with critical race theory, as argued by Mastro, Behm-Morawitz and Kopacz (2008), that despite the content analysis findings of immigrants and their stereotypic portrayals, “only minimal attention has been paid to investigating the sociocognitive effects of exposure to these images on consumers. The present student addresses this issue by applying insights from the aversive racism framework” arguing that more subtle race-based responses are likely to merge when media provides “sufficient ambiguity for the expressions to be attributed to race-irrelevant rationales” (p. 2). However, it’s not just the student that applies subtle race-based responses, but the teacher as well as a member of consumer culture. It is the subtle interactions between groups and individuals that may be race related reactions, and examining how media affects these interactions is the only way to truly uncover covert racism. This is crucial in examining media texts because the subtle language uses and descriptions that causes in-group behavior by white Americans to focus on immigrants as ‘the other.’ It is the coupling of racism and social identity construction that would allow for news media narratives of immigrants to be translated into everyday behaviors within the classroom, both on the part of the student and teacher. As Mastro et al (2008) argues further, “indeed, these investigations reveal that

stereotypical portrayals of Latinos in the media is associated with negative judgments about Latino characters' disposition, stereotypic evaluations of Latinos in society, and even unsympathetic race-related policy preferences" (p. 2). Since this is the case, then it is clear that these stereotypic evaluations are seeping into policy decisions and curriculum.

In exploring contemporary forms of racism, the aversive framework posits that

Evaluations of racial/ethnic minorities are characterized by a conflict between White's endorsement of egalitarian values and their unacknowledged negative attitudes toward racial/ethnic out-groups (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). According to this perspective, although egalitarian dispositions are a highly valued outcome of current social norms that oppose racial discrimination on both legal and moral basis (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998), racial antipathy persists due to (a) cultural and ideological differences between majority and minority group members (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998), which are often reflected in media representations of race/ethnicity (Ramirez Berg, 2002), (b) cognitive processes that give rise to racial stereotyping (Brewer 1979; Hamilton, 1981), and (c) social identity motivations that lead to intergroup comparisons (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) (p. 3).

In other words, in what ways might teachers enact racial antipathy that are damaging to their students? If public schools are to provide equitable education for all students, then how might the ways we decide on curriculum, policy and everyday classroom management be related to how news media construct immigrant identity?

In order for Latino/a immigrant students to be successful, we must first evaluate the ways in which media might be influencing educational practices. Since Latino/a immigrants have been historically stereotyped in television and film, it only stands to investigate the ways in which news media may be constructing different types of

narratives concerning the Latino/a immigrant population. Since this is such a large issue within politics today, these stereotypes and belief systems are translating their way into everyday school environments, affecting the way immigrant students construct knowledge and have access to a democratic education.

Significance of Study

This research will contribute to the literature of immigrant students and the challenges faced in education. Of the current discourse on immigrants in current politics, I feel this rhetoric is especially sharpened due to the current economic crisis, and white U.S. born citizens are afraid of “illegals’ taking away jobs because they are willing to work for less. What’s lacking here is an examination of the fear involved and where that fear originates. I argue that it is largely due to the media’s construction of Latino/a immigrants and immigrant lived experiences; who they are, where they come from and why they’re in the United States. More interestingly, I feel that the fear and rhetoric surrounding Latino/a immigrants is strange due to the history of the United States, and the historical influx of immigrants. The United States have forgotten (or perhaps never acknowledged) that the United States was and is a nation of immigrants, landing here and stealing this land from Native Americans as well as from Mexico. Perhaps this is where this fear is rooted, that what we did will inevitably be done to us. But I feel it’s more complex than that and this complexity is directly related to the rise and access to technology and news media. The interpretations we have as citizens come largely from the stories told in news media, and we are influenced by a larger social construct telling

us what to say, do, buy, think, feel, and be afraid of. This is important because the way we structure language and reality will directly affect the legislation around the growing Latino/a immigrant population in the United States, as well as the growing number of immigrants in school, how they learn, what they have access to, and how we as educators help them, not just in academics, but in life.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigms

According to Corrine Glesne (2006) qualitative researchers attempt to understand and “interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them” and adhere to a social constructivist paradigm (p. 7). This paradigm asserts that human beings create meaning out of their perceptions of the world around them and rejects a hierarchal standpoint, meaning that no one viewpoint or perception is any more real than any other. Values such as rapport, reflexivity, and trustworthiness inform this viewpoint as it does my research study. I subscribe to this paradigm, and espouse what Patricia Hill Collins (2003) argues when she says, “epistemological choices about who to trust, what to believe, and why something is true are not benign academic issues. Instead, these concerns tap the fundamental question of which versions of truth will prevail and shape thought and action,” (p.49). Through this research, I attempted to investigate what is considered truth when it comes to immigrants and Latino/a populations. Ontologically, realities are co-constructed in the process of research; therefore, because of this, I align with a critical theory paradigm that is concerned with issues of ideology and power as discussed in chapter one. In other words, historical and structural conditions of oppression seek transformation and change through critique of these institutions and

realities. Additionally, I adhere to interpretivism that “opposes the positivism ontological view that there is one reality (...) and instead proposes a relativist world of multiple realities that are constructed and co-constructed by the mind(s) and require to be studied as a whole” (Lincoln and Guba, 2013, p. 88). It is to come to understand the lived experiences of others; within these paradigms I situate my epistemology, which Villaverde (2008) defined as “the study of knowledge, its nature, origin, limits and methods. It outlines certain conjectures about knowledge: what can be known, and through what methods it can be known” (p.107). In order to approach what can possibly be known, I adhere to two main paradigms: social construction and interpretivism. I also illustrate how my research methods align with critical theory.

Social Construction

To address these issues, I incorporate social constructionism as a foundation for my paradigmatic framework. For Kincheloe (1991),

In contrast to rationalism, constructivism maintains that human thought cannot be meaningfully separated from human feeling and action. Knowledge, constructivists assert, is constrained by the structure and function of the mind and can thus be known only indirectly. The knower and the known are Siamese twins connected at the point of perception (p. 26-27).

In other words, human beings construct their perceptions of the world around them, and “no one perception is ‘right’ or more ‘real’ than another, and that these realities must be seen as wholes rather than divided into discrete variables that are analyzed separately” (Glesne, 2006, p. 7). Ontologically, for constructivists, absolute reality is unknowable;

that which we investigate are individual perceptions of reality, thus multiple realities exist that shape the world from individual vantage points; “realities are apprehendable in the form of abstract mental constructions that are experientially based, local and specific (Guba & Lincoln, 1994)” (Hatch, 2002, p. 15). Thus, epistemologically, knowledge is not objective but rather symbolically constructed depending on one’s own positionality and lived experience. The truth is what we agree it to be and not some objective, empirical rationality. For constructivists, methodology mainly depends on researchers, for extended periods of time, “interviewing participants and observing them in their natural settings in an effort to reconstruct the constructions participants use to make sense of their worlds” (Hatch, 2002, p. 15). This was a clear choice in that in representing reality, one is not documenting “actual” reality but rather a reality that is constructed/created based on how it is described, what images are attached to it, and how language is used to discuss it within society. This reflects my beliefs as a researcher; meaning is constructed between the knower and the known to uncover the constructions of a particular truth or reality. As Hall (1997) states, representation “is the way in which meaning is given to the things that are depicted” (Jhally). In other words, it is the act of giving meaning that shifts depending on context and their relationship to other signs. News media uses codes and signs to create specific meaning; that meaning is neither fixed nor capital T truth, therefore, it is constructed to serve a particular ideology. That ideology is then employed to make decisions, call forth specific representations and meanings concerning who immigrants are and what they want and how they affect society. Thus, these meanings can be used

undemocratically and dangerously to oppress and marginalize a group of people like Latina/os who do not reflect the reality these codes and signs conjure up.

Interpretivism and Interpretive Critical Inquiry

Additionally, as an extension of Social Constructivism, I worked to utilize an interpretivist framework as well, as what Schwandt (2003) describes as

what distinguishes human (social) action from the movement of physical objects is that the former is inherently meaningful. Thus, to understand a particular social action the inquirer must grasp the meanings that constitute that action. To say that human action is meaningful is to claim either that it has a certain intentional content that indicates the kind of action it is and/or that what an action means can be grasped only in terms of the system of meanings to which it belongs (p.296).

Put another way, to find meaning in action, we must look for the intention behind that action, as well as the historical and political context around that action. We must go through a process of interpreting and understanding.

Ontologically, “there are multiple realities, each with its own claims to coherence, and none can be privileged over another. Those claims take form in the discourses that we construct to make sense of our lives. Those discourses are, in effect, texts that represent our lives, and we can only know the world through textual representations of it” (Hatch, 2002, p. 18). Interpretivists also critique the notion of a universal truth with a capital T, as well as employing the mode of deconstruction via Derrida as a methodological tool to examine textual representations of the world, searching for gaps and holes where the text unravels (Hatch, 2002, p. 18). This is what I attempted to do in

my research concerning news media and how they construct truths and representations in my document analysis of news narratives and within my interviews.

Within this paradigm, realities are constructed and seek out “subjective beliefs that are co-created between the researcher and the researched, where the ‘knower and known are interaction, inseparable’” (Lincoln and Guba, 2013, p.88). According to Carr and Kemmis, as qtd in Lincoln and Guba (2013), interpretivism aims to “ ‘replace the scientific notions of explanation, prediction and control, with the interpretive notions of understanding, meaning and action’ ” (p.88). This aligns also with Delpit’s (2006) culture of power as I addressed in chapter one, in the act of uncovering and making transparent the ways power operates to marginalize and oppress those who are not members of the culture of power. To sum up, the goal is to understand the lives and experiences of the researched. It was my goal to recognize and come to understand how the media socially constructs narratives about Latino/a people and immigrants, and to take that awareness and see if these representations appeared in the experiences of teachers and support personnel. As I mentioned previously in chapter one, when Latino/as do appear in media, they are most likely to appear within the context of affirmative action, drugs, or welfare. Additionally, according to The National Council of La Raza, Latino/as are likely to be portrayed in stereotypical ways; these stereotypes operate as a type of curriculum, and stereotypes often function as shortcuts for consumers to reality or what is “true.” So, to draw from both paradigms, I employ interpretive critical inquiry that works to carry out social change as a main goal. This is my main goal here in this research; Media matters,

and messages play out and affect us. The social change comes in awareness and a development of critical media literacy.

Also, interpretive critical inquiry contain the following characteristics: 1) the aim of inquiry is not to generalize; 2) the cause-effect relationship is impossible because behavior is contextual; 3) a researcher is the instrument, and the goal is not to marginalize the researched; 4) knowledge provides experience; and 5) “trustworthiness, authenticity, and catalyst for action form the criteria for judging for quality and goodness” (Lincoln and Guba, 2013, p. 89-90). My research works to follow these criteria in that I’m focusing specifically on news media constructions of Latino/a experience, and to recognize that language and news media are socially constructed through powerful ideological constructs. . These are the underlying paradigms for my study that informed my approach to the data collected through document analysis and interviews. Through interpretivist critical inquiry and theory, my aim as a researcher is to expose the intricate ways ideology and power are embedded within news media, and demonstrate that those ideologies and power are trickling into educational spaces and practices. Overall, my research aims to uncover webs of power, and work toward emancipation and making clear the oppression and marginalization affecting Latino/a students and immigrants.

Critical Theory

As stated in chapter one, this research is guided by my curiosity around how media representations of Latino/a populations may affect teachers and support staff in educational spaces. Within media as stated in chapters one and two, information and

representations are encoded with ideology and those doing the reporting hold power over the information they are disseminating as well as in the ways they construct the news report. Read as an objective truth, news is consumed as an accurate reading of an objective reality, rather than a production steeped in specific intention on the part of the reporter and news organization. Critical theory is concerned with issues of power and “the emancipation of those researched by making aware of their oppression based on social, cultural, political, economic, gender, sexual, ethnic or racial values” (Lincoln and Guba, 2013, p.88) and aims for emancipation from oppression. To do this, “the researcher engages in dialogues with the researched, and in praxis, the socially conscious action that emerges and becomes enmeshed with the ways of living of the researcher and those researched” (Lincoln and Guba, 2013, p. 89). In other words, I engaged with teachers and support personnel to uncover if and how racist narratives about Latino/as may be implicated within educational areas as well as engaged in document analysis of news media transcripts in order to make them known so educators and other school personnel may be able to work toward emancipation.

I employed critical theoretical analysis in my exploration and study of news channels CNN, FOX News and MSNBC as they are the dominant news institutions watched and consumed in the United States. Then, I looked to see how the language and narratives of these news channels appeared within interviews with teachers and support personnel of Latino/a students. In using critical theory, I attempted to illustrate how

media narratives about Latino/as also appear in educational spaces through the key criteria of critical theory epistemology as outlined in chapter one.

My research matches critical theory criteria in the following ways: 1) *Critical enlightenment*: I worked to identify and analyze how media narratives work to harm Latino/as through language choice and narratives reported within news. 2) *Critical emancipation*: my goal was to show how media works as a force that controls and influences, through specific narrative and language use, the lives of Latino/as within discussions of immigration. 3) *Rejection of economic determinism*: within this research, my goal was to illustrate how media operates as a form of power and is embedded with ideology. 4) *Critique of instrumental or technical rationality*: I worked throughout this research process to make my whiteness and positionality transparent as I interpreted and coded the information found through document analysis and interviews. 5) *The impact of desire*: my research shows that language is socially constructed and the ways news media describe and report about Latino/a immigrants is destructive and oppressive. 6) *Reconceptualized theory of power: hegemony*: there is a clear hegemony at work within news media narratives as the language choices made are coded with ideas that are attached to meaning; this meaning is universalized and decoded that works to naturalize who Latino/a immigrants are and how they affect the United States. These meanings come to represent reality and become dominant and hegemonic. This is how media wields power to shape and influence social consciousness around Latino/a immigrants. 7) *Reconceptualized theory of power: ideology*: my analysis of news transcripts attempts to

show how ideology is imbedded in the choices made around the type of language used and information focused on within reporting about Latino/as. The ways in which these stories are reported and framed are conscious choices influenced by one's own ideology.

8) *Reconceptualized theory of power: linguistic/discursive power*: throughout this research I have continuously worked to show how language is neither neutral nor objective. 9) *Focuses on the relationships among culture, power, and domination*: within the exploration of media and language as stated in chapters one and two, I worked to also demonstrate how that which we read as real or objective (news) is often blurred with representation, as the structure of language is coded with specific messages based on ideology and power of those doing the construction and use of language, which is then decoded by consumers and turned into social practice because it is read as reality, rather than as a social construction. How do these representations affect those consuming them? That is what I illustrate here between news transcripts and interviews with educational members of a school system. 10) *The role of cultural pedagogy in critical theory*: overall, my goal was to expose how media is constructed and used as a form of education about Latino/a immigrants and population and to show how media is affecting educational practices and pedagogy for Latino/a students.

Methodology

Research Strategies

I conducted a critical qualitative study using document analysis and interviews as methods of inquiry. I identify as a qualitative researcher from a Social Constructivist and Interpretivist paradigm and I have identified tenets such as a rejection of hierarchy, the existence of multiple realities, and deconstruction of grand narratives around Latino/a lived experiences. As I worked to do this throughout my research, I hoped to deconstruct media narratives that operate in the U.S. as both grand and “capital T” truth. This research is based on two phases of research: phase one included document analysis of major news media transcripts between 2008 and 2012 between 8pm and midnight on the three major news networks in the United States: FOX News, CNN, and MSNBC and phase two included conducting four interviews with teachers and support personnel in education. I analyzed news transcripts “to focus upon language or the ‘tacit rules that regulate what can and cannot be said, who can speak with the blessings of authority and who must listen, whose social constructions are valid and whose are erroneous and unimportant’” (Glesne, 2006, p.16). I interrogated where this happens, how, and if these social constructions were evident in the interviews with teachers and school personnel.

Participant Selection

The participants I originally wanted to interview were only public high school teachers in North Carolina. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, from a 2011

American Community Survey, the total Latino/a population of North Carolina is 828,000, and out of those, 204,000 are students in K through 12, making up 13% of the student population (www.pewhispanic.org). I had planned to recruit high school teachers specifically because high school students face particular challenges in preparing for college, and also may experience racist peer bullying at a higher level. At first I wanted to interview Latino/a students, but because of difficulty in IRB approval for students under 18, I decided to shift focus onto high school teachers and their familiarity with their Latino/a students to tease out any experiences from them that may be related to media discussions around Latino/a students and immigration.

Participants Selection Process

The original idea was to conduct two one-hour interviews with four to six high school teachers about their pedagogy and media consumption, as well as at least one hour of observation in their classroom. However, recruiting for participants proved to be difficult. Once I received IRB approval, I created a flyer calling for teachers to participate that had Latino/a students in their classes. I originally began my recruitment at a school designed to serve recently arrived refugee and immigrant students new to the United States. However, the school was going through administrative changes having just received a new principal in the fall of 2010, and I had difficulty securing participants. I made several attempts at contacting area high school principals to gain permission in emailing and disseminating information about my research study. Many principals were unresponsive, despite several attempts at contacting them via email and telephone.

However, I was able to secure two high school teachers at one newly built high school on the outskirts of the county through emailing the principal. The principal put me in touch with multiple teachers, and two responded to my email queries. These two teachers, one self-identified Latina and one self-identified white woman had a mixture of students between ninth and twelfth grade. Additionally, I interviewed a coordinator in a county school district who works mainly with Latino/a youth. She is affiliated with an organization tied to community assistance for Latino/a families designed to assist Latino/a families and immigrants. Further, the organization houses a space for after-school activities as well as assists in communicating, translating, and negotiating for students in their school environments, including with teachers, counselors, school administrators, and parents. The final interview was a woman in charge of English as a Second Language program for her school district. For each of these participants, I was able to interview each person one on one for about two hours. The teachers seemed hesitant to allow me to observe them in their classrooms, as they were worried about their students and my presence. The other two women had no students to observe, and I was not allowed to observe them doing their day-to-day jobs. Additionally, because I had difficulty in recruiting participants, I expanded the search to include college teachers and members of the school community, not necessarily just teachers, who worked with a diverse group of students. No college participants volunteered to participate.

Data Collection

Given my paradigmatic leanings toward social construction and interpretivism, ethnographically I would have preferred to immerse myself in a particular high school and to interview and observe Latino/a students. However, given my difficulty in recruiting participants, the data collection process occurred over the course of a year, between spring 2012 and spring 2013. The two methods of data collection included a) document analysis and b) interviews . Document analysis involves gathering documents and analyzing and interpreting the data. For this particular piece of the process, I chose to analyze and interpret news media from the most popular news media in the United States to see how they discussed immigration. I chose news media instead of focusing on film or television because a) there is little literature that discusses immigration for Latino/as within news media specifically and how the news represents and constructs reports on Latino/as and immigration and b) as stated within chapter one, how groups are represented in media frame how we view them in daily life (Dyer 1993). My goal was to find out how Latino/as are represented in news media and how that might be affecting their experiences in educational areas.

Interviews include collecting data “from study participants by carrying out conversations with explicit purposes” (Lincoln and Guba, 2013, p.97). As the researcher, I interviewed a total of four people who worked in education in some capacity, whether as an educator or as support personnel. I approached the interviews with ten open-ended questions that began with “tell me about” in order to leave it open to let the interviewee

choose what and what not to share with me. Included in these questions, often as follow-up, were questions about types of media consumed, their thoughts about immigration and specifically Latino/a students, and what challenges they think Latino/a students face in education and what their thoughts were about Latino/a students. As Merriam (1988) states, “interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” and find out “what is in and on someone else’s mind” (p.72). It was my aim to establish a conversation with my interviewees that was guided by my paradigmatic framework

Document Analysis

Document Analysis, is “a method of data analysis that closely examines either the content and meaning of texts or their structure and discourse” (Lockyer, 2008, p.3). Texts, including news media content, are deconstructed to examine how they are constructed, how meaning is constructed, and what those meanings are. I approached each news transcript taken from a news program as a text from a critical, interpretivist, and social construction epistemology. As Lockyer (2008) states, “textual analysis does not attempt to identify the ‘correct’ interpretation of a text, but is used to identify what interpretations are possible and likely. Texts are polysemic—they have multiple and varied meanings” (p. 3). Meaning, in other words, is derived from codes (Stuart Hall) and often asks questions like who created the text? What are the author’s intentions? Who is the intended audience? What is the author’s purpose? To acknowledge that document analysis can often times reflect the ideology of the researcher, it is important to highlight

that texts can never “be completely understood because all readings of texts are socially situated” (Lockyer, 2008, p.4). In my document analysis process, I chose news networks CNN, MSNBC and FOX News because they are the dominant news stations that communicate information to consumers within the United States. To narrow my search, I chose to analyze transcripts that appear on these stations between 8:00pm and 10:00pm, as these are the hours that each station has a talk show by one of their most known news pundits. Additionally, 8:00pm and 10:00pm are the highest rated hours of the day for news programs. Because the idea of immigration and Latino/as has been conflated, I chose to search for the terms “illegal alien,” “alien,” “immigrant” and “illegal immigrant.” The term “illegal alien” was chosen first, as that is the signifier I saw most often used within news media discussions of Latino/as. Next, I decided to just search for the term “alien” to see if the term itself would only appear in conjunction with Latino/as. Then, I added the term “illegal immigrant” as it is a variation on the most widely used term “illegal alien” and is often used instead of “alien” when someone is conscious of the encoded meaning of “alien.” Next, I just searched for the term “immigrant” as I wanted to see if that term only brought up discussions about Latino/as. In searching for these terms, all of the transcripts that appeared were in direct relation to Latino/a population. Within this search, 58 transcripts appeared total with at least one search term appearing at least once in the news transcript. I narrowed my search to these terms, as well as between the years 2008 and 2012 looking specifically at the hours of 8:00pm to 10:00pm. I printed

out all 58 transcripts so I could read through them one by one to analyze the four search terms.

Within the analysis of these transcripts, four main themes emerged: illegal alien or immigrant, criminality and violence, metaphoric representation, and border narratives.

Interviews

I interviewed four women who work with or in one school district in a southeastern city in the U.S. rather than a number of teachers in different schools and levels. The complexity here focuses on four members who participate in a school community who deal with a particular population and the experiences they face as support personnel or as teachers. Of course, teachers and support personnel occupy multiple spaces: support personnel are also educators, and teachers are also support personnel. The distinction focuses specifically on their job title and description rather than me as a researcher making that distinction. Each interview lasted between 1.5 and 2 hours; the teacher interviews took place in their classrooms during their planning period, and the other two interviews took place in early morning before meetings and other responsibilities were scheduled for the day; in other words, the interviews took place in places convenient for the participants. This allowed, in addition to the interviews, a personal glimpse into the areas where they work and tease out the topics to which they explored and shared with me, the researcher. Additionally, I conducted what Merriam (1988) describes as the semistructured interview, where

certain information is desired from all the respondents. These interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic (p.7).

This is how I conducted my interviews; I came into the interview with specific concepts to discuss, however, I left the questions open-ended to acknowledge what Merriam (198) states, that “it is impossible to escape the human factor in the interview situation, the interviewer can minimize gross distortion (...) a good interviewer refrains from arguing, is sensitive to the verbal and nonverbal messages being conveyed, and is a good reflective listener” (p. 75). Moreover, I borrow from Stake (1995), about case study research and apply it to interviews that “we are interested in [topics] for both their uniqueness and commonality. We seek to understand them. We would like to hear their stories” (p. 1). I worked to gather as many stories and experiences as I could to show the unique experiences for teachers and those who work in advocacy positions for Latino/a youth. Thus, my interviews consisted of four interviews, field notes for all four and for three of the four interviews, a taped record of the interview itself. Of the three interviews recorded, I transcribed each interview, word for word and printed them out. For the one interview that was not recorded, I used my field notes from the interview. All field notes from all four interviews were typed up and printed out.

Data Analysis

Document Analysis

According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic material (...) and requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (p.27). Within these documents, words and images have been recorded without a researcher’s interference. For Atkinson and Coffey (1997) document refers to “social facts which are produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways” (p.47). Within my research, these social facts included transcripts from three dominant news media: CNN, FOX News, and MSNBC. I searched within a database called LexisNexus and once transcripts emerged, the analytic procedure that followed entailed “finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents” that I then organized into “major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis” (Bowen, 2009, p.29). As I began to code, I operated from a grounded theory, where grounded codes emerge “from the data because you put aside your prejudices, presuppositions and previous knowledge of the subject area and concentrate instead on finding new themes” (Gibbs and Taylor, 2005, Online QDA web). Overall, step one included looking at word repetition, searching for commonly used terms around my main search terms; next, in using my main search terms, I investigated how those key words were presented in context, or key-words-in-context. Further, I engaged in comparison and contrast, “essentially the grounded theory

idea of constant comparison” which includes asking what something is about, and how it differs from other statements (Gibbs and Taylor, 2005, Online QDA web). I also participated in pawing, circling and underlining, searching for multiple meanings and grouping them into patterns. Finally, once I had terms and meanings grouped into like classifications, I began to tease out, or cut and sort into piles, “the traditional technique of cutting up transcripts and collecting all those coded the same way into piles (...) an essential part of analysis” (Gibbs and Taylor, 2005, Online QDA web). Next, once my codes were linked to specific branches or patterns, I found that I engaged in hierarchical coding, with a branch extending from main units to classify sub-sets underneath the main “branch” or code heading. Overall, my coding process was descriptive, used to describe the information found in the data.

Further, document analysis is often used in conjunction with other modes of qualitative research as a means of triangulation, where the researcher attempts to provide evidence that creates credibility. Through this, according to Bowmen (2009), a researcher can demonstrate a link across data and reduce the impact of particular biases. Within my research, I took the transcripts and again engaged in thematic analysis to engage in triangulation. Not only did I conduct interviews and document analysis, I also, within my analysis and thematic coding, looked for specific codes or patterns, and grouped like codes together to classify into groups. These groups were based on likeness and similarity, and then took those groups and developed into four themes. Within this coding process and examining topics that may relate to my interviews, I attempted to engage in

triangulation that Patton (1990) argues can help guard against the accusation that a study is only the result of one particular method or investigator bias. For Berg (2001), “analysis of the data once organized according to certain content elements should involve consideration of the literal words in the text being analyzed, including the manner in which these words have been offered” (p. 240). This allows opportunity for the researcher to learn about how subjects or authors of text materials view the social world. is what I attempted to do within my analysis here, acknowledging the framing as well as the representations of Latino/as to gain insight into how this particular population is being viewed and constructed within news media; further, I wanted to investigate the ways these representations and narratives may be sprouting up in educational spaces. This relates back to my theoretical framework around medial literacy and critical pedagogy; it is through analysis and understanding how narratives, images and representations are constructed within media that we learn how to engaged critically with these texts to combat Delpit’s culture of power, as well as fight to make more democratic and equitable educational spaces for Latino/a immigrant students. This also references critical whiteness as a framework to investigate the ways Latino/as may be positioned in relation to only white documented citizens, but to also other immigrant groups like Canadians (who are usually read or assumed to be white), Muslims, and other immigrants of color. It is important to examine who is included and excluded within these narratives, and my results indicate a very clear conflation between Latino/a people and immigration.

Interviews

Using thematic analysis, “a process that involves coding and then segregating the data by codes into data clumps for further analysis and description” (Glesne, 2006, p.147), I began to examine my field notes and interview transcripts for codes and themes, or essentially, according to Coffey and Atkinson (1991) “condensing the bulk of our data sets into analyzable units by creating categories with and from our data” (p. 26). I searched for patterns or themes and began the process of classification to create an initial coding scheme. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and so were the field notes I took while conducting the interviews. As stated in Coffey and Atkinson (1991) as they cite Miles & Huberman (1994) in relation to coding, “the organizing part will entail some system for categorizing the various chunks, so the researcher can quickly find, pull out and cluster the segment relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct or theme” (p. 28). So within this process, I sorted and grouped each piece of data under a specific code. After going through this process, I then began to search for like or common codes in order to organize the data. I grouped common codes together to develop into categories; those categories were divided and re-grouped through several rounds and began to create what Glesne (2006) names an “organizational framework,” (p.152). Grouping thematically helped uncover the three main themes from the interviews: education and policy, stereotypes and racism, and assimilation. I engaged in what Wolcott (1994) (as qtd. in Glesne, 2006) states as the second category of data transformation; it includes identifying all features and how they interact. Throughout this

process I tried to acknowledge that “we do not merely report what we find; we create accounts of social life, and in doing so we construct versions of the social worlds and the social actors that we observe. It is, therefore, inescapable that analysis implies representation” (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p.108). This process was influenced by my theoretical framework in that I borrowed from critical theory and critical whiteness as well as media literacy and critical pedagogy: in my recognition, as Coffey and Atkinson suggest, that through my coding and analysis of this data, this information implies representation; further, this information is, as Glesne (2006) states, “that what we come to know, whether ‘gained’ or ‘co-constructed’ is always partial, is always fragmented” (p.107). This relates back to critical theory in that absolute reality is unknowable, and that instead, this information represents individual realities of the participants. Their positionalities as well as my own as researcher affect the information shared; however, the knowledge here is co-constructed, and does lead to how Latino/a people may be represented within media. My ability to practice media literacy within the coding practice assisted me in practicing the tenets of critical theory and tease out how these representations and narratives are constructed. The three main groups that emerged in the interviews are: stereotypes, media and racial tension; education, policy, connection and support; and identity, assimilation and advocacy.

Researcher Trustworthiness

In this section I explain why I think my work is “credible.” Also, throughout the text, I attempted to point out how my frameworks and epistemologies overlap, as well as

thread the importance of this topic not only for educators and those who occupy educational spaces, but as a testament to the importance of critical media literacy and an acknowledgment of critical whiteness. It was not just important to acknowledge my positionality as a white researcher, but the confrontation of my whiteness allowed me to see and question the rhetoric and politics around news media and constructions of a group of people as well as narrative that attempts to explain the experiences of Latino/a people. This revelation led to me being called upon to become critically aware of my privilege and the privilege of others, particularly those who participate in the construction and dissemination of this rhetoric and legislation around Latino/a individuals and population. This research not only works to uncover the complexity and production and consumption of news media and how that information is transmitted (often like seeds swept and passed along on the wind) but to a recognition of a moral outrage as to what is happening and how not only educators and support personnel, but all of us, might work to disrupt this dissemination that is intricately connected to ideology and power. Thus, it is my hope that I have worked through multiple methods to strive for “multiple data sources, methods, and theoretical schemas” (Lather, 2003, p. 191). The methods I utilized included document analysis, interviews, field notes from the interviews (field notes), and reflections on my own personal experiences with Latino/a students and immigrants within teaching and tutoring. I also worked to demonstrate these stories and documents within a particular theoretical framework, as mentioned in chapter one, to demonstrate that these pieces are socially constructed, embedded with codes of power and ideology,

and work to develop into narratives that do significant harm to a particular population. I worked to be aware of contradictions and strived for validity; throughout the process, I operated from a position of reflexivity, and strived to be as concerned with “the research process as you are with the data you are obtaining. You ask questions of the process along the way” (Glesne, 2006, p. 125). I tried to attend to issues of trustworthiness throughout the research process, including getting signatures for permission from interview participants, as well as being as transparent as possible in identifying my research goals, my positionality, and my end goals for this research project.

Participant Descriptions

Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of the participants. I only reference the participants by first name only.

Maria

Maria works in a county in North Carolina and holds a position that works in support capacity of the English as Second Language program for the county, as well as works as an advocate and liaison specifically for Latino/a students within her particular county. Her job often includes community advocacy work on the part of undocumented students and their families, though that information is illegal to know. The students she works with often inform her of this anyway, and she collaborates with other members of her school to assist if and when the need arises for her students and their parents, including but not limited to housing assistance and information, community advocacy

and basic amenity assistance, negotiating with school counselors and working on behalf of high school students who would like to attend college. She is in charge of four other school advocates and language interpreters for her county. Hailing from Brooklyn, New York, she is the daughter of immigrant parents and remembers her mother watching American television to help her learn English and being afraid to be found out that she was undocumented.

As an interviewee, Maria was straightforward and knowledgeable, clearly passionate about her students and the members of the school system and community in which she works. She was well educated about her position and the student population in her county. It was clear through her passion when she spoke that she deeply cared for her students and families and also recognized the lack of support and misguided misinformation that circulated in the United States concerning Latino/a students.

Anne

A high school teacher for sophomores and juniors, (very few first years) Anne is a self-identified White woman who is in her 40s and has been working at her high school for over fifteen years in North Carolina. She teaches History as well as American Government and sometimes Economics. Her students vary between AP and “regular” courses (her words) and so do her students. Some of her classes throughout the day are a mixture of all levels, and she often has “lower income” students in her “regular” classes. She was straightforward about her students of color and how they sometimes perceive

her. She has a mixed race daughter from a previous marriage and admitted she wasn't very informed about issues surrounding Latino/a youth or immigration, especially immigrant policies. She acknowledged that her Latino/a students do have obstacles and she doesn't know how to help them negotiate, nor does she know much about "diversity" or "diversity policies and expectations" and within her interview, wished that her school would hold diversity workshops to assist her in gaining additional knowledge about her students of color as well as learning how to approach these issues when they inevitably surface in her class discussions.

Sara

Sara is a self-identified Latina from Mexico who works for a local organization designed to assist Latino/a immigrants transitioning to the United States and need assistance in registering for school, finding a job, and negotiating their new surroundings. She is in her early 40s, and was very quiet but passionate in her interview when she began talking about the obstacles Latino/a immigrants face in their acclimation to the United States. She wasn't comfortable providing me as a researcher with personal information, but she did discuss some of her thoughts concerning how the United States constructs narratives about immigration.

Lupe

Lupe is a young woman in her mid-twenties who is a teacher at the same high school as Anne who just graduated from a local university with her master's in education

for grades 9 through 12. Her family originates from Puerto Rico, though she admitted that her colleagues often think she is Mexican. She was very open and hospitable to talking about her Latino/a students, and was concerned that she was the only Latina who was on staff in her high school. As a school that operates in a highly populated school district with Latino/a students bused in, she thought there needed to be more diversity on staff, as well as acknowledged the lack of education on the part of her colleagues concerning the diversity within Latino/a backgrounds and experiences.

Table 1. Interview Participants

Name	Demographics	Occupation	Concerns
Maria	older woman, identified Latina immigrant parents	ESL Lead, school and family advocate and tutor	school and community racism; lack of support for undocumented Latina/o students
Anne	identified white, early 40s, has mixed race family members	high school teacher, History, Economics, and American Government	concern about ignorance dealing with diversity and Latino/a students
Sara	mid-30s, self- identified Latina	community advocate for Latino/a immigrant families	concern for her families and students she works with; specific racism in and around the community as well as the state and national level
Lupe	mid-20s, identified	electives and students with disabilities,	the racism among her colleagues; more diversity and understanding with her

	Puerto-Rican,	grades 9 through 12	colleagues
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Conclusion

Overall, for my research I borrow from Michelle Fine the idea of “working the hyphen,” the idea that texts should interrupt the act of othering, and recognize where “Self-Other join in the politics of everyday life, that is, the hyphen that both separates and merges personal identities with our inventions of Others (...) we rethink how researchers have spoken ‘of’ and ‘for’ Others while occluding ourselves and our investments” (p.70). As I have stated, I have worked to make transparent this relationship in my research as well as throughout my data collection. I worked to be mindful of the act of othering, and to be aware of my frameworks and epistemologies as they informed my research.

CHAPTER IV

DISRUPTING NEWS NARRATIVES

In 2009, Latina/os made up almost 15% of the U.S. population, and projections point to, by the year 2050, comprising almost 29% of the population. Additionally, California and Texas are made up of over 35% Latina/o and many are bilingual, with 68% of children from adult immigrants speaking both Spanish and English (Moran, 2011). Growing and becoming a major part of the broader American landscape, it is important to note that “media use among Latinas/os has been linked with identity formation” (Moran, 2011, p. 3). Furthermore, in studies based on patterns within television, Latinos in the United States have been both “dramatically underrepresented and excessively stereotyped” (Mastro, 2003, p. 98). These stereotypes tend to be restricted to a few stereotypical representations such as “comics, criminals, law enforcers, and sex objects (...) characterized by limited intelligence, inarticulate speech, laziness, and verbal aggression (...) while Latinos are more likely to be portrayed in service roles than another other racial/ethnic group on television” (Mastro et al. 2008, p. 2). The question is, what is being communicated within these images, and more specifically, what is communicated in the context of news media? According to Mastro et al (2008), little attention has been paid to the effects these images have on television consumers in

general; but what about consumers of prominent news media in the United States? As Mastro et al (2008) argues, that for many White Americans, what they know about Latinos comes from mass media (p. 2). Mass media is the single most influential source of knowledge for the public in discussion and dialogue (Santa Ana, 2002, p. 56). And when discussing immigration, the way this subject is broached in public discourse has “direct bearing on the ways that health, education, legal and political institutions enact policies to deal with this phenomenon” (Jefferies, 2009, p. 15). In other words, it is necessary to examine the ways in which the popular news media in the United States are creating narratives and reporting on the subject of Latino/a immigration.

Furthermore, mass media, and in particular news media offers us a working framework of the world around us, a concept of “truth” and “set roles and established power hierarchies” within which we interact (Downing and Husband, 2007, p. 9). Inevitably, the dominant majority, or, those in charge of reporting on the lived experiences of people of color create, through language and imagery, stereotypes that “become a social and psychological definition (...) that in consequence is completely fixed, ‘carved in stone’ so to speak” (Downing and Husband, 2005, p. 33). Specifically in news media, framing becomes quite important as explained in chapter one. However, it is important to reiterate in this chapter, before breaking down the use of the word “illegal,” and “immigrant” or “alien”, that we understand framing, “is largely deployed in two senses, one to indicate that something of importance may be excluded from the media picture, the other to concentrate rather on what is actually in the frame, in the

photographic sense” (Downing and Husband, 2005, p. 36). The questions asked need to include what words are used, what images are they coupled with, and how narratives create stereotypes and understandings of a particular group of people of color.

According to Downing and Husband (2005), TV news in the 1990s typically framed reporting in two ways: a crime story or an ethnic cultural festival. Reducing a news story about communities of color to such binaries results in excluding details and narratives about their lived experiences, while zeroing in on either a positive or negative (likely negative) singular piece. These framings may reflect the reporter’s or network’s viewpoint, motivations, (whether conscious or unconscious) and what is “left out” as well as what is included. Language and how it is introduced

prompts us to explore the long-term impact on audience’s definitions of social reality, whether minority-ethnic audiences who find themselves systematically excluded except in repetitive and limiting news scenarios, or majority-ethnic audiences, with only superficial work-contacts at best with people of color, who draw their perspectives on themselves as well as on people of color largely from these frames (Downing and Husband, 2005, p. 36).

Within these frames, the “illegal immigrant” narrative is one that is popular in the immigration discussion; by concentrating on particular facets, even if positive, media “excludes depth and variety at the same time as it obsessively focuses on one trait or a mere handful of them, individually brilliant comedy acts, video games or news reports do not generally succeed in subverting the frame” (Downing and Husband, 2005, p. 37). In other words, even in focusing on positive pieces, framing inherently shirks the depth and investigation a nuanced and well-rounded news report should give, thus reinforcing

subtle racist and stereotypical depictions within the news story itself. In articulating the lack of complexity in news media, we uncover “racist frameworks and stereotypes” that are of “central significance;” because this is done daily, “to define and massage the present and the past for us (...) that vocation is not straightforward and is never ‘done.’” New challenges constantly present themselves. In this sense we could think of mainstream media as workshops of today’s and tomorrow’s racist ideology” (Downing and Husband, 2005, p. 39). To clarify, the process of reporting is an ongoing process, a continuum of meaning making. To engage in narrative media analysis, it is important to situate the context of how news media operates, especially around immigration.

Within these frameworks, since the U.S. is rooted on a Black-White dichotomy in terms of race within policy and media, it forces those not within these categories to define themselves within this continuum. As Fergus, Noguera and Martin (2009) argue, “the dominant paradigm of race, which positions Whites as the superior group and Blacks as the inferior (the ultimate ‘other’), has shaped the ways in which Americans have thought about race and racial disparities” (p. 172). Thus, if self-identified Latino/a immigrants, whether citizens or not, are forced to contend with this dominant mode of framing race and identity, the term “immigrant,” “illegal” and “alien” is a concept that is not just separate from the Black and White continuum, but is not even a member of the human race, or of this planet. The ultimate “othering,” this language choice and representation work to subjugate anyone who self-identifies or is labeled “immigrant,” “illegal” or “alien.” Even engaging in assimilation, acculturation, or gaining citizenship doesn’t help;

regardless of their residential and political status Latino/as will always be immigrant, which is a way of saying “not white, not black.” As Arzubiaga and Adair (2009) posit,

The term ‘Latino’ refers to a group, which includes descendants of the inhabitants of territories incorporated by the United States, immigrants from several countries, and people of various educational levels, who speak different languages and engage in multiple literacies and cultural practices. The panethnic conception of Latinos in the United States, however, carries the burden of representing a monocultural group that is often represented as the paragon of what is wrong with society. Balibar (1990) argues certain national/cultural groups are demonized, ascribed negative stereotypes, and marginalized to fulfill a scapegoat role. The confluence of sociopolitical, historical, and cultural legacies mark Latinos and the only language they are mistakenly associated with as the target of these negative projections (p. 301).

Though Latino/as are often situated as being responsible for crime and drug use in the United States, the reasons for this are intricate and multifaceted. However, one of the contributing factors to this grand narrative concerns language labels chosen by dominant news media, often looked to as the “truth” or “expert” on the subject. As Santa Ana (2002) posits, “while the mass media lack total autonomy to construct public opinion, their power is tremendous” (p. 50). Further, Santa Ana (2003) quotes Robert Entman who provides an evaluation of how news media works: “ ‘the media’s selection of data makes a significant contribution to the outcomes of each person’s thinking...the media do not control what people prefer, they influence public opinion by providing much of the information people think about and by shaping how they think about it” (p. 50). They control the shape of the message, and are the ambassadors of knowledge, designated keepers of all information about daily events and social issues. They are the narrators to the public, those who tell grand stories about the day’s events. Because of this, they

manipulate social consensus, characterizing social structure and reinforcing a homogenous view of the world. As Santa Ana (2002) asserts, “media owners attempt to bend the characterization of the world that their employees shape to their advantage at the expense of other social groups, so reinforcing a particular view of the structure of U.S. society is conscious, to a degree;” it is also an unconscious endeavor, as those reporters who create and report on knowledge are also members of the society in which they practice their position, for who “the natural order is accepted” (p. 52). Therefore, as these narratives of immigrants (which, again, have become synonymous with anyone of Latin American, Spanish or Mexican descent) are repeated with minimal change or challenge, and these portrayals become “acceptable” worldviews. Furthermore, the concept of symbolic annihilation refers to the “under-representation of a segment of the population—and their criminalization, marginalization, or sensationalization when they do appear;” in terms of Latino/a populations, the only representation they tend to receive lies in these categories, which contributes to social myths produced that reinforce stereotypical and racist ideologies (Valdivia, 2010, p. 82).

Metaphoric Representation

Within historical metaphoric representations in language of the “immigrant,” specifically immigrants of color, metaphors such as immigrants as a body of water, or flood, immigrants as animals, and immigrants as an invasion have permeated the discussion, particularly in the analysis of Proposition 187 introduced in 1994 in the state of California (Santa Ana, 2002). Within this ballot initiative (also known as the “Save our

State initiative”) denied undocumented immigrants “a range of public benefits, including education and nonemergency health care. It would have also made school administrators, health care workers, social service personnel, police and other state employees responsible for determining the residence status of any ‘apparently illegal alien,’” (Santa Ana, 2002, p. 67). Within this proposition, metaphors and language use describing undocumented Latino/a residents in California were widely racist and dehumanizing, constructing a narrative of an “us versus them” split. As Santa Ana (2002) contends, “sustaining a discourse practice is the root power of metaphor (...) such discourse practices uphold social practice, as they embody unreflected and naturalized ideological assumptions about their subject space [and] the discourse practices are so frequently and causally used that they become automatic and invisible to our everyday view” (p. 101). Within the language of Proposition 187 in California, arguably when the metaphoric representations of “alien” and “illegal” began to circulate surrounding Latino/a American residents, criminality and social deviance propagated the proposed legislation, and was framed around the idea of “civic duty,” which “reinforced dominant assumptions about the danger of ‘illegal’ immigration by focusing on nativist, racist, and xenophobic justifications for immigration restriction” and accomplished stereotypes through metaphors of “pollution, infection, and infestation” (Cisneros, 2008, p. 571-72). In other words, as Cisneros states (2008), when the nation is described as a physical body, news media presents immigrants as an infectious disease or as a physical burden or weight on

the country. When the nation is described as a house, immigrants are criminals, invaders, or dangerous floodwaters and storms to be survived (p. 572).

Since the 1990s when the language choices began to take shape, the discussion around Latino/a immigrants, has only increased in the racist and vitriolic descriptions of their humanity, lived experiences, and overall presence in the United States. It is not just the media, of course, as this would be a reductionist viewpoint. However, as an institution, new media constructs racist narratives, and “institutional racism exists where the unthinking routines of a work places, in their effects, are racially discriminatory” (Downing and Husband, 2002, p. 150). So, despite the growth of the Latino/a population, many studies, particularly those done by Council de La Raza (1994) “have documented the symbolic annihilation of Latinos by U.S. general market media. These studies, of both entertainment and journalistic media production, conclude that in those few instances when Latinos are recreated as members of U.S. society in general market media, they are most often portrayed as criminal, or otherwise socially deviant” (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 1). This is conflated into the general representation of Latino/as, and the continuing focus on illegal Latin American immigration to the United States, “to the virtual exclusion of other aspects of Latino life” (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 1). There is clearly a preoccupation and misperception that a majority of Latino/as are unauthorized immigrants. Coupled with the majority’s (i.e. White’s) consumption of negative stereotypes of Latino/a persons with the grand description of terms like “illegal” or “alien” results in “negative judgments about Latino characters’ disposition, stereotypic evaluations of Latinos in society, and

even unsympathetic race-related policy preferences” (Mastro, Behm-Morawitz and Kopacz, 2008, p. 2). The consequences begin to underscore the likelihood of discrimination by majority group members and that this exposure most likely leads to “an array of disadvantageous race-based outcomes for minority groups, ranging from hostility among White viewers to disparate judgments of guilt and prison sentencing by White consumers” (Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, and Kopacz, 2008, p. 3). This hostility arises due to the consistent nurturing of difference particularly due to the cultural and ideological differences between the majority and minority groups.

Furthermore, because the language in news media is often presented as fact or evidence, they are couched within the context of authenticity, and become that which shapes our cultural reality as truth. Most recently, in the last ten years or so, immigration is framed around the idea of an invasion, the most predominant terms being “alien” or “illegal,” and with those, “amnesty.” The task here is to investigate how understandings of Latinos/as construct concrete understandings about immigration and immigrant to understand the harmful effects on an entire group of people. Here’s where critical media literacy and pedagogy come into play. Once the ways in which this is happening is made transparent, we can begin to call upon others to examine their own rhetoric and understandings.

Immigration and Popular News Media

Currently, news media are “a social construction and a social resource, as well as a significant force in the construction of public ideology. Sociologists have looked at the social construction of news, examining how social factors influence the shaping, selection, and presentation of the news” (Jefferies, 2009, p. 20). In other words, what we come to know as ‘news,’ is something that is “defined by interested parties” (Jefferies, 2009, p.20). This references issues of ideology and power, particular what Delpit refers to as the culture of power, mentioned in chapter one. News and reporting are produced and created, not by facts or truth, but by how they choose to ‘frame’ the information, which allows them to report quickly and communicate large amounts of information in a short time span. In this way, “media frames become the central organizing ideas to selectively represent certain aspects of the stories” (Jefferies, 2009, p.20). These frames become themes in which the information is reported, as well as contain ideology concerning undocumented residents. As Gramsci (1971) argues, ideology refers to attitudes and beliefs through which we see the world. This ‘perceived reality’ is comprised of common beliefs that benefit society, and “what is important to note about ideologies is that people do not act on the world as it is but as they perceive and make sense of it. So ideologies do not have to be objectively ‘true’: as long as people believe an ideology to be true, then it has true material consequences for them” (Jefferies, 2009, p.21). As framing and ideology are related, framing refers to the ways an issue is positioned and discussed over time, while ideology are

complex and deeply held. People learn them or are socialized into them. While a framing effort may successfully persuade someone that a particular issue can be explained by an ideology, framing processes do not persuade people to adopt whole new ideologies. At best, they may initiate the journey (Oliver and Johnston, 2000, p. 47).

So, what journey do popular news media in the United States set us adrift upon, in the ways that immigration and Latino/a immigrants are presented and framed? My focus in the analysis was how the news pundits used specific language choices to describe Latinos/as, what the events were surrounding these language choices, and what types of stories came before and after the discussion of the search terms. What came to light within this research is out of 58 transcripts, the majority of the search terms were found used in conservative news channel FOX News. Out of 58, 41 were from FOX News while 13 were from CNN. Of those on CNN, eight out of 13 used these terms on the conservative show *Lou Dobbs Tonight*. The remaining four were outliers from the three main news networks. The overwhelming representation on FOX News demonstrates a clear ideological bent within news discourse for that network. However, this information does not just suggest that only those who consume FOX News are susceptible to this particular way of describing Latino/a immigrants. Rather, FOX News representation is indicative of a larger issue of news media that may be operating in subtle and nuanced ways within their own reporting of Latino/as. Even though this research is narrowed to these four particular news networks, I argue that the analysis provided here represents what is occurring in news networks that discuss immigration; these terms and concepts are used consistently and frequently and it is not a stretch to say that these narratives are

often repeated in conversations with others and in other media representations and rhetoric around Latino/as as stated in chapter one and two.

News Organizations

Table 2. News Organizations

NEWS ORGANIZATIONS	OWNED BY/AFFILIATION	IDEOLOGY & HISTORY	POPULAR ANCHORS
CNN	Owned by Turner Broadcasting System, an affiliate of Time Warner	launched in 1980 by Ted Turner; 1 st 24 hour news network; liberal bias	Anderson Cooper, Piers Morgan, Wolf Blitzer, Kate Bolduan
FOX NEWS	Cable division of News Corp, owned by Rupert Murdoch	Party-line conservatism; launched in 1996	Bill O'Reilly, Glenn Beck (quit FOX in 2011), Greta Van Susteren, Lou Dobbs (formerly on CNN)
MSNBC	NBCUniversal Television Group, made from Microsoft, General Electric; NBC Executive Tom Rogers developed Microsoft partnership	Launched 1996 as Microsoft and GE created NBC Unit; claims a "progressive" stance	Keith Olbermann, Chris Matthews, Rachel Maddow, Joe Scarborough,

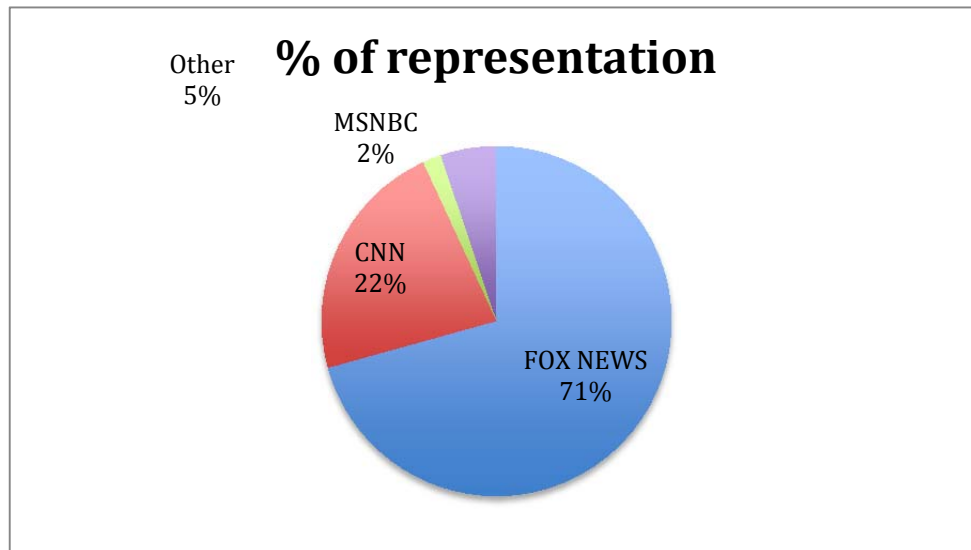


Figure 1. News Media Station Representation

Framing News

According to Downing and Husband (2005), as an institution, the mass media provides a framework that works to organize the ways individuals interact with the world within set roles and hierarchies of power (p. 9). For the document analysis, I found that each story that dealt with my search terms and categories were framed by prominent leads into or leads out around three main concepts: 1) Political discussions surrounding President Obama or the Democratic party or members of his Cabinet/staff that were deemed 'incompetent' or 'lacking' in their positions in multiple different areas of their hold in office, not just on immigration policy; this also included discussion related to the economy 2) Violent crime reports concerning "criminals", who were often times labeled "illegal" or "illegal aliens." These crimes, when not explicitly dealing with "illegal

aliens” were often times reports about teenagers or gang-related crimes. 3). Border narratives, which often tied in with the violent crime reports, concerning border patrol, Obama’s lack of border surveillance or reports of ICE and their inability to “do their jobs.” These frames are significant as patterns that emerged within the analysis, as a way to deliver the news stories dealing with immigrants and immigration. There were five main themes that appeared: 1) illegality with subsets of “alien” and “immigrant”; 2) “crime/criminal” with a subset of “violent/violence”; 3) issues of citizenship with subsets including “anchor babies”; 4) an “us versus them” narrative, sanctuary cities and patriotism and 5) metaphors, which include invasion, flood, wave, and aliens. “Alien” appears twice under both “illegality” and “metaphor” because it is used both as a describing term to denote a being that is without humanity and not of this world, and also as used as a metaphor that represents one that is not of this world and through presence, is breaking the law. As the analysis will indicate,

Language is not only a means for exposing and discerning truth, but also for stifling and misrepresenting it. Derogatory mis-ethnic stereotypes pave the way for harmful social movements because they create a despised class of people (...) the most effective propaganda rejects or disregards the humanity of particular groups of people. Everyone in the outgroup is classed together. They are all deemed subordinate and socially repulsive. Misethnic insults convey ‘the message that distinctions of race are distinctions of merit, dignity, status, and personhood.’ Such speech disregards or outright rejects the humanness of its object, making it easier to commit aggressive acts with moral equanimity. It rejects the notion that each individual is intrinsically important and fit for social membership. Once the others have become mere chimeras with purely wicked attributes, they no longer have any fundamental rights, and society, surely, is no longer obliged to protect their basic rights (Tsesis, 2002, p. 167).

In other words, the power of language can work to disenfranchise a group of people, and as my analysis will show, this is precisely what is happening within the construction of news media narratives surrounding immigration and immigrant members of this country, documented or not.

Illegal, Alien, Immigrant

Out of 58 news transcripts, the position of the terms “immigrant” always appeared within the same news story to also include “illegal” and “alien” and was always used to refer to someone of Latino/a descent. Most often, the term “Mexican” was either explicitly stated or implied through border narratives concerning Arizona and Texas and the border they share with Mexico. Distinctions were not made, and all members of “immigrant” were conflated into the blanket term “Latino/a.” What was special about the terms “illegal,” “alien” and “immigrant” is that they all appeared in the other themes and narratives; they were used as descriptors in the telling or “reporting” of newsworthy information regarding stories that contained members of Latino/as race and culture. So one of the most important points is that the terms “illegal”, “alien”, and “immigrant” described Latino/a culture. The consumers are always reminded that people of this particular race and culture are breaking the law, are devoid of humanity and do not belong nor are originally from the United States. Again, it’s important to note that this connection does not just occur in these four networks, but rather these are the dominant news networks in the United States, and often smaller news stations and other communicative institutions incorporate these same stories as well. It is important to note

that it's not just the consumption of this one particular news source (FOX). Instead, this analysis should be read as an uncovering of patterns consistent across four major news networks. To make the leap that this rhetoric analyzed here gets disseminated in other formats is not a stretch. Rather, it is highly likely. Further, these messages about Latino/as are reinforced consistently in all transcripts. For example, Casey Wain, a CNN correspondent on October 14, 2007 report concerning "Illegal Aliens and Licenses" provides a voice-over:

The union representing 2,200 Phoenix police officers overwhelmingly supports changing department policy to permit officers to report more illegal aliens to federal immigration authorities. Seventy seven percent of the Phoenix Law Enforcement Association's members disagreed with their department's current policy. It prevents officers from contacting Immigration and Customs Enforcement about suspected illegal aliens involved in misdemeanors or traffic violations. The union cites examples such as one officer's recent encounter with four males in a vehicle. According to the officer, there was a gun in the car. Only the driver produced I.D., a paycheck with a phony Social Security number.

MARK SPENCER: PRESIDENT, PHOENIX LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION: It all indicated they're in the country illegally. The department's response, do not contact ICE. Let them go. So I've got four male occupants who can't speak English, who can't provide I.D. in a vehicle with a weapon, and my officer is not able to contact ICE. That doesn't make sense.

Wain comes on afterwards to explain that there are legal barriers and scarce resources that prevent cooperation from ICE, which implies that there is an underfunding of immigration resources.

WAIN: Other Arizona law enforcement officials disagree, pointing out that police help the feds investigate bank robberies, narcotics trafficking, and counterfeiting, all federal crimes.

JOE ARPAIO, MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA, SHERIFF: I don't go around complaining that we don't have the resources. We manage our resources properly and we enforce all the laws. And this is just a cop-out, a cop-out. They're illegal.

They came across that border. They broke the law. They're breaking the law every minute they're here.

WAIN: The police union also cites last month's killing of fellow officer Nick Erfle, gunned down by an illegal alien gang member who had been deported to Mexico, reentered the United States and was in Scottsdale police custody earlier this year. ICE says Erfle's killer probably would not have been released on bail if ICE had been notified he was in police custody.

Another CNN correspondent named Pilgrim goes on to report about a government plan that would crack down on "illegal aliens" and then, a brief statement of what's to come when Pilgrim says:

Coming up, the state of Texas tells President Bush to stop abusing his power in the death penalty conviction of an illegal alien Mexican for the brutal rape and murder of two teenaged girls.

Later on in that same news story another CNN correspondent named Bill Tucker discusses New York and the issue of driver's licenses to "illegal aliens." Tucker later states, in his discussion with Republican Joseph Bruno, the New York State Senate Majority Leader, that "non-driver identification cards and drivers' licenses issued to illegal aliens will look exactly the same as those issued to legal residents and citizens. And that has many in the state worried about possible voter fraud." Indicated in this interaction is a presence of fear, one that indicates that if "illegal aliens" gain access to voting, our country will be in trouble. As Tsesis (2002) states, "the repeated expression of racist and ethnocentric ideology makes commonplace the view that minorities are innately unworthy of full constitutional rights" (p. 169). In other words, this exchange

implies that immigrants of Mexican descent (or perceived as such descent) are not worthy of having identification, and most certainly should not be able to have I.D.s that may indicate they live and work in the United States.

In an exchange on CNN in November 2008, CNN anchor Rick Sanchez discussed the topic of whether “illegal immigrants” in the U.S. military should be granted automatic U.S. citizenship. Before reporting on the “illegal immigrants, Sanchez framed this discussion in reporting about a Finnish teen whom purportedly carried out a mass shooting at a school, and Hillary Clinton’s campaign facing charges of planting audience members. In the choice to link these new stories, the discussion of an “illegal immigrant” and the question of citizenship is also linked to a massacre and lying by a democratic campaign. Furthermore, Sanchez begins his show by stating, “It’s Veteran’s Day,” a discussion concerning the citizenship of “illegal immigrants” on a day that is touted as the ultimate American holiday. This particular holiday’s connotation surrounds American patriotism and emotion, which is likely to work in favor of keeping “illegals” from gaining citizenship. Sanchez talks with the President of Americans for Legal Immigration Political Action Committee.

SANCHEZ: So there’s something really important that I think we should talk about. You know, I always say in this show and in my conversations with Lou [Dobbs] that it’s not about the immigrants. It’s about immigration, immigration, a policy. That’s what we in this country somehow have to fix, especially—You ready?—especially if the immigrants in particular are willing to give their lives for this country, die for the United States of America.

Look, if you’re willing to fight for America, you should be treated like an American, those people. It’s like an exception. Well, most people would agree

with that, right? Not William Gheen. He's joining us right now. Let me read to you, Mr. Gheen, what the president actually said. Let's put that up, if we can. If somebody is willing to risk their lives for our country—quote—'they ought to be full participants in our country'. Where is he wrong?

WILLIAM GHEEN: Well immigrants in the military are fine. But trying to stick illegal aliens in the military, come on, Rick. They have shown a disregard for our territorial jurisdiction and our borders.

SANCHEZ: Well, that's what we're talking about. We're talking about what you would call illegal aliens. Those are the ones the president is talking about.

GHEEN: All right, well, you called them immigrants, and I wish you would stop insulting immigrants by comparing them to illegal aliens. It's very rude to call them that, because immigrants have done things the right way. Illegal aliens have broken many laws.

SANCHEZ: Well, actually, I will tell you where you're wrong. Most of the people who are in your words illegal aliens or illegal immigrants actually come to the United States legally and then tried to process their papers after they were here or allowed their visa to expire. So, they actually came into the country legally to begin with. And that's about half the people that you call illegal aliens. Answer that, sir.

GHEEN: Well, right at that point, they become legally termed. And it is an affront and anti-immigrant to try to compare them to America's law-abiding immigrants.

In this discourse, it is clear that Gheen is making a distinction between “immigrant” and “illegal alien,” cutting the difference in those who are here legally, and those we are not. He does not, however, take into account that those here legally may have once been here illegally or vice versa; further, it is not a stretch to say that Gheen's differentiation between “immigrant” and “illegal alien” likely lies on a racist assumption that immigrants are not Latino/a, and that illegal aliens are. Consistently within this type of news reporting, illegality always accompanies any discussion concerning immigration

and those of Latino/a descent. According to Rodriguez (1998), many studies have documented the “symbolic annihilation” of Latino/as in the mass media. He states,

These studies, both entertainment and journalistic media production, conclude that in those few instances when Latinos are recreated as members of U.S. society in general market media, they are most often portrayed as criminal, or otherwise socially deviant. A pervasive example of the consequences of this representation (and lack of representation) is general market journalism’s continuing focus on illegal Latin American immigration to the United States—to the virtual exclusion of other aspects of Latino life (p. 1).

In other words, none of these transcripts included discussion about any other aspect of Latino/a or Latin American life other than their citizenship or “alien” status. Rodriguez (1998) further points out that “ethnicity is a collective identity that arises from daily experience, in the instances examined here, out of the daily experiences of commercial cultural journalistic production. Similarly, race and (and racial categorizing) is a social process. The racializing of U.S. communities of Latin American descent is a recurring theme” (p.2). The social process of news media is far-reaching and constructed by those who are deemed “authoritative” simply by their presence. This relates back to Giroux (2002) in that media is not neutral and has ideological bent and power in what and how news gets told. Sanchez seems to position himself as a voice of reason so to speak, challenging Gheen’s ideology around immigration and positions it as too radical at first.

As the exchange continues, within the same transcript, Sanchez and Gheen continue their discussion on the topic of citizenship for undocumented military members, and Gheen continues to differentiate between “immigrant” and “illegal alien.”

SANCHEZ: All right. So, Bill, you would tell this guy—he comes back to the United States—hey, thanks for doing your job; thanks for sacrificing your life; now get out of the country; you’re deported? You would say that to him?

GHEEN: No. No. I would say, if he’s an illegal alien, he shouldn’t be in the military anyway, for three important reasons. One it’s ridiculous to think that illegal aliens are going to defend our borders and our states against invasion, Rick. Two, we already have a problem where forces trained by the U.S. military, such as Las Zetas, which controls the border more than the Border Patrol, were trained by the American military at Fort Benning, South Carolina. Now they’re importing drugs and illegal aliens.

SANCHEZ: Well, hold on a minute. I want to go back to number one. I just started thinking about what you just said. It’s ridiculous to think that an illegal alien would defend our country.

GHEEN: Defend our borders.

SANCHEZ: You just had one.

GHEEN: Yes.

SANCHEZ: We just had one on the air who did just that.

GHEEN: That’s an illegal--you said that guy is an illegal alien in the military?

SANCHEZ: He is. He’s an illegal alien in the military.

GHEEN: He needs to be arrested and detained as soon as possible and put back in his home country. You think training these people with arms and demolitions is a good idea? You have got 60 percent of the people in Mexico that feel that the United States shouldn’t even control the Southwest United States, and you’re going to train them in arms and explosives? Bet the French are glad they didn’t do that before the illegal aliens started burning half the country over the last two years, Rick.

SANCHEZ: So, man, you must hate these guys. You just want them—I mean, you want them punished altogether.

GHEEN: There’s no hate. The truth is not hate.

In this discourse, Gheen is clearly marking the difference between an American and an “illegal” in refusing the idea that someone without documentation could also be a member of the U.S military. Despite service, Gheen is offering fear as a response to training “illegals” in weapons and arms. It is clear by his follow-up statement that many of “them” still think the southwest U.S. belongs to Mexico that “illegals” would use their training against the U.S., instead of for it. It’s also evident that many of these themes overlap, as this discourse also includes an assumption of an “us versus them” mentality, as well as a concern over border control. As Cisneros (2008) contends,

As George Lakoff and Sam Ferguson note, the framing of immigration discourse in the terms of ‘illegal aliens,’ ‘border security,’ and ‘amnesty’ focuses entirely on the immigrants and the administrative agencies charged with overseeing immigration law. This framing is ‘NOT neutral’ but ‘dehumanizes’ immigrants and ‘pre-empts’ a consideration of ‘broader social and economic concerns’ (such as foreign economic policy and international human rights) (p. 571).

This is exactly what is occurring in the exchange above. Sanchez acts as a foil in response to Gheen, prompting him with “you must really hate these guys.” At first Sanchez reads as a level-headed reporter simply trying to “get at the truth” of Gheen’s ideology. However, Sanchez continues to perpetuate the racist narrative Gheen espouses, repeating Gheen’s language and prompting him to go further. While Sanchez is read as objective since he occupies the reporter space, someone who is simply interviewing and trying to understand, he also highlights Gheen’s ideology through repetition and probing questions instead of questioning and challenging Gheen, which works to cement Gheen’s

racism. On the surface, Sanchez had multiple opportunities to complicate Gheen's stance, but did not.

Criminal, Crime, Violence

In locating the terms “illegal” and “alien” within the transcripts, one of the most common linkages was to crime, criminal activity and violent behavior that posed a threat to American citizens, or linked Latinos/as to drug and criminal gang-related narratives. Out of the 58 transcripts, over 40 were of *The O'Reilly Factor* where most of the narratives occurred around discussions of immigration. FOX News overwhelmingly represented the immigration discussion on their main talk shows, almost always occurring on *The O'Reilly Factor*. This is evidence of what Chomsky (1988) argues: that the news is responsible to capitalist, hegemonic forces as mentioned in chapter one. If major corporations own news networks, then their interests and profit are skewed toward higher ratings that equal more money. This hegemonic rhetoric is more likely then to appear in news stations across the board, because as I have established, news is not neutral nor absent of ideology.

In a program in February 2008, O'Reilly discussed Geraldo Rivera's penning a book on immigration.

O'REILLY: In the 'Personal Story' segment tonight, last April Geraldo Rivera and I had a gentle conversation about criminal illegal aliens and the system that allows them to access our nation.

(CLIP BEGINS)

O'REILLY: He doesn't have a right to be here.

RIVERA: He didn't commit a felony...

O'REILLY: He doesn't have a right to be in this country.

RIVERA: But that has nothing to do with the fact that he's a drunk.

O'REILLY: He should have been deported. He should have been deported, and this mayor and the police chief didn't deport him.

RIVERA: Listen, do you know how many people we have in jail? How many of them are illegal aliens? Illegal aliens commit crimes at a lower rate than citizens do.

O'REILLY: This guy wouldn't have been here.

RIVERA: Cool your jets. It has nothing to do with illegal aliens. It has to do with drunk driving. You don't obscure a tragedy to make a cheap political point.

O'REILLY: It's not a cheap political point, and you know it. This is justice.

RIVERA: It has nothing to do with that.

O'REILLY: No. You want anarchy.

(end clip)

O'REILLY: All right. Now we're talking about the Virginia Beach situation where an illegal alien drunk driver with a sheet, a rap sheet killed two teenagers. And my position was obviously—shouldn't have been in the country. Well, that dustup created so much controversy that publishers wanted to hear what Mr. Rivera thought in depth.

It's clear here that O'Reilly is trying to underscore that an "illegal alien" killed two *American* teenagers. If this "illegal alien" had been in his home country, and the accident occurred, O'Reilly wouldn't care because the victims wouldn't be American. He implies that "illegal aliens" are criminals and if allowed to stay on U.S. soil, will be harmful, and

will commit and engage in criminal activity *against* American citizens. O'Reilly goes on to argue a difference between law-abiding residents and "the criminal." Rivera, though also conservative leaning, does try to challenge O'Reilly's viewpoint and point out that drunk driving and one's racial identity do not matter; however, Rivera is continually usurped by O'Reilly, and within this clip, serves as a springboard for O'Reilly to continue his rant. Rivera is positioned, through O'Reilly's responses, as simply someone who is uninformed and naïve, as O'Reilly states, "this is not a cheap political point. This is justice." The issue of justice is much more important than politics, which is implied in O'Reilly's response.

O'REILLY: But the criminal—you and I separate on the criminal deal, and that's your weakness and your argument's weakness. America has got enough problems with its own criminals. If you have an out-of-control madness situation, as you had on the southern border, it's madness. It's better now, but when we were fighting last April it was madness. And then you have a certain amount of those people coming over committing crimes. And you know the gangs from El Salvador, the drug dealing. And it's not just Hispanics. It's Russians. It's a whole bunch of people. Those people do not deserve to be here and have to be swiftly deported from this country and you should be behind that.

O'Reilly goes on to mention, in contrast to Rivera's point that most of the population in prison are American documented citizens, that illegal aliens still commit crimes.

O'REILLY: The big difference is that we are allowing people to come here who shouldn't be here. Just yesterday in Minnesota, another drunken illegal alien bangs into a school bus, killing kids. Now, could that have happened with an American? Sure.

This type of rhetoric allows for an “us versus them” dichotomy, linking the Latino/a identity with an inherent criminalization, implying two important “truths” about Latino/as: 1. That all folks who either identify as or could be identified as Latino/a are inherently criminals just by being on U.S. soil and 2: that Latinos/as are not U.S. citizens, ever. This was further evidenced in 2013 when a 10-year-old mariachi singer named Sebastian de la Cruz from Texas sang the U.S. National Anthem at Game 3 of the NBA finals while wearing a traditional outfit from his El Salvadorian heritage; immediately, the Twittersphere, an atmosphere made up of everyday citizens, exploded with anti-American rhetoric, claiming and accusing this young man of being an “illegal” or “anchor baby” and thus, should not be allowed to sing the National Anthem. According to Trueba (1999), “the anxiety generated by the immigration waves at the end of the twentieth century, intimately related to the worldwide restructuring of the economy and global sociopolitical and economic changes, has resulted in the increased demonizing of immigrants as criminals” (p. 3). Not only is the construction of immigrant as criminal commonplace, but it also works as a metaphor when “the nation is conceived as a house, immigrants are represented as criminals, invaders, or dangerous and destructive flood waters” (Cisneros, 2008, p. 572). In other words, immigrants, especially Latinos/as, are seen as an invasion of criminality that must be stopped, no matter what. This is the dominant and consistent theme throughout the media discourses in immigration policy discussions.

In a segment on CNN in May 2008, news anchor Lou Dobbs focused on the administration's refusal to protect American citizens from Mexican drug cartels and dangerous food imports.

LOU DOBBS: Tonight in Congress over the administration's outright refusal to protect American consumers from dangerous food and drug imports, tonight disturbing new evidence that violence from Mexico's war and drug cartels and illegal alien traffickers has spilled in American suburbs north of the border. And tonight, the author of a provocative new book on illegal immigration, Jason Riley, the title of his book says it all, "Let Them In." He's among my guests.

Before Dobbs goes into discussing drug trafficking and illegal aliens, he first reports on President Bush's apparent attack on Democrats and then Senator Obama who President Bush accused of wanting to talk with terrorists and radicals. In terms of framing, it is common that discussion of immigration and "illegal aliens" often began or ended with political discussions attacking Obama before he was President, or the Democratic Party and policy.

Though it is clear that prominent and perhaps all news media has an intentional bias and slant, framing can lead the viewer to the narrative idea that it is not the news that is positioning "illegal aliens" within the context and framework of criminality, but rather, just the facts. As Dobbs and O'Reilly have illustrated, they are in positions that are defined as "reporting the news." Because of this, their narratives resort back to this implication: that what they are describing is simply what happened, and that many if not all "illegal aliens" do these criminal behaviors because of who they are, not because of the way the news frames and reports on these happenings. This is deceptive and

dangerous, if we are talking about the stories being told and aligned to the Latino/a lived experience. This is how ideology and power take hold and operate.

Dobbs goes on to discuss the failed diplomatic relations between Israel and the U.S., and then moves back to discussing “a new threat to efforts to tackle our illegal immigration crisis.”

LISA SYLVESTER, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Lou, the borders are broken, people are fed up with illegal immigration, yet Congress is talking about scrapping the E-Verification system that’s currently used by employers to check a worker’s eligibility status—Lou.

DOBBS: I wonder why they do that. Is it a U.S. Chamber of Commerce idea? We’ll find out.

Also, violence from the Mexican drug cartels and illegal alien traffickers along our border is spreading to suburbs north of that border. We’ll have the story.

Dobbs breaks here and mentions, in addition to the drug cartels, the lack of protection for American consumers from drug and food imports, clearly indicative that this story is related to the “illegal alien” traffickers and protection of our borders. He begins in discussing drug cartels and illegal aliens as the defining and perhaps only members of drug cartels in Mexico.

DOBBS: The violence from Mexico’s warring drug cartels and illegal alien trafficker gangs spilling across our southern border and into residential neighborhoods in this country. Just this week federal agents discovered more than 100 illegal aliens being held captive in homes in Arizona and California. Casey Wian has our report.

As the story progresses, Wian covers the story of Mexican drug cartels bringing “illegal aliens” across the border to the U.S., the conditions in which they are kept, and the problems facing immigration in relation to illegal entry versus legal entry. The program goes on to report back to employers not verifying employee’s legal status. The framing and construction of the report almost suggests that Mexican drug cartels and “illegal alien” traffickers use these “illegal aliens” as a form of currency, or as a punishment to the United States, erasing their lived experiences and tying them to the narrative of drugs, crime, and anti-U.S. sentiment.

In a Fox News report in May 2008, Bill O’Reilly reports on a widow of a police officer, killed by “an illegal alien” and how she is now suing the business that employed “illegal alien” Juan Quintero. O’Reilly had two attorneys on the show: legal analyst Lisa Wiehl and FOX news anchor Megyn Kelly.

O'REILLY: In the “Is it Legal?” segment tonight, a very intense situation in Houston. Joslyn Johnson, the widow of Houston police officer Rodney Johnson, who was murdered by an illegal alien in 2006, is now suing a business that employed the killer, Juan Quintero. Does she have a case?

OK Kelly, we covered this case. Sanctuary city, Houston, they allow illegal aliens to do whatever they want down there, even if they’re criminals. They don’t conform to ICE. They do everything wrong in Houston, Texas.

The result, this fine police officer, Mr. Johnson, is killed. His wife, two years later, now says, ‘I’m going to hold the company that hired Mr. Quintero accountable.’ Does she have a chance?

MEGYN KELLY, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Well, you know, every part of you wants to say yes, that she should recover against that employer. But I think it’s a very tough case. And it will be hard for her to make it in court. I think it will probably get thrown out on the papers. If it gets to a jury she’ll probably win.

But here's the thing: when you sue for wrongful death, which is what she's suing for, you've got to prove that it was reasonably foreseeable to that employer that this illegal alien was going to get a gun, get arrested and shoot a cop seven times. That's what she's going to have to prove. That the employer would have foreseen that and nonetheless employed this guy anyway. That's just too tough a burden, I think.

O'REILLY: What do you say?

LIS WIEHL, FOX NEWS LEGAL ANALYST: I disagree. I would love to bring this case to a jury, because this guy had multiple DUI convictions. He was deported after he had sexually assaulted a child in 1999.

O'REILLY: In 1999.

WIEHL: He's a scumbag. He drank, by everybody's account, and including his own, he drank 24 bottles of beer, cans of beer a day.

O'REILLY: The employer knew all of this?

WIEHL: The employer knew all of this. For whatever reason he brought him back into this country.

O'REILLY: How do you know he knew this?

WIEHL: Everybody knew that. This was a common thing. In fact, when he was pulled over all the beer and everything was along.

O'REILLY: Wait, what do you mean everybody knew it? How did the employer who hired this guy know he had all these beers?

WIEHL: The employer and this guy were friends. This employer really reached out to help him and gave him this job.

O'REILLY: The employer had a personal relationship with this guy. You would assume that you would know that this guy was a bad one?

WIEHL: Exactly. And certainly about the convictions and the DUI's and all of that. So look, is it foreseeable that he could see being shot seven times? Maybe not quite that but something.

O'REILLY: So he was a irresponsible guy that shouldn't have been in this country?

WIEHL: Absolutely.

O'REILLY: You say?

KELLY: First of all, just to make Lis's case for her, it's even worse than that, because the employer, actually, according to the lawyer who represents the plaintiff in this case, the employer helped the illegal get back into the country after he had already been deported.

O'REILLY: illegally.

KELLY: So he actually helped the guy get back here.

O'REILLY: He definitely has a negligence beef against him.

KELLY: No, he doesn't. Listen....

O'REILLY: No?

KELLY: If this illegal had killed somebody while drunk driving or had molested another child, two things that were on his record that the employer knew about, I would be saying something else. But to argue that it was reasonably foreseeable he was going to get a gun and shoot a cop seven times is taking—wait, let me make my point—is taking it one step too far. Because to show wrongful death and negligence, you've got to show, No. 1, that the general danger was foreseeable. And, No. 2—and No. 2, that this particular victim or similar class of victims was also foreseeable. They can't do that.

WIEHL: He had been pulled over. He had a gun, and he would shoot a cop absolutely. I want that in front of a jury. I want that in front of a jury.

Within this exchange, several assumptions about the identity and personhood, or lack thereof, are made about Juan Quintero, who the news commentators reduce to “that illegal” or “bad one.” Bad one of what? A bad illegal? Using the word “that” or “the” in front of the world “illegal” dehumanizes a person, despite the crimes he may have committed. Furthermore, the fact that he might be in the United States without

documentation does not automatically reify his future behavior as a “criminal” or someone who is going to shoot and kill a police officer. The implications of this simplistic dehumanization is racialized, and as such, meant to be generalizable beyond this individual instance. The conclusion that this employer should have assumed, because Quintero was an “illegal alien” that he was going to commit murder of a police officer, is part of what Downing and Husband (2005) state when they argue that “it is precisely in the definition of the situation offered by news media that a racialization of events may be transmitted more or less uncritically to audiences. Employing ‘race’ as real, whether in news media or entertainment, is to participate in racialization: it is a reproduction of ‘race’ thinking (p. 5). In other words, by focusing on the race and documentation status of Juan Quintero, his Latino racial status is automatically equated to criminality, and will commit acts of violence and crime against U.S. citizens.

In every transcript out of the 58, the concept of crime or criminality is always present. As Cisneros (2008) points out, “while immigrants are portrayed metaphorically as a dangerous pollutant that is seeping through the borders and collecting on street corners, they are also often represented as criminals or invaders” (p. 582). This reductionist narrative of Latino/a immigrants leaves the news viewer with authoritarian news reporting that verifies the assumptions and stereotypes already imbedded in dominant media about who Latino/a immigrants are, what they want, why they’re here, and what they want to take away from the U.S. As Yvonne Jewkes (2004) contends in her discussion of the construction of crime narratives,

News discourse is generally not open to interpretation and audiences are invited to come to consensual conclusions about a story. Thus, not only does news reporting privilege brevity, clarity, and unambiguity in its presentation, but it encourages the reader, viewer and listener to suspend their skills of critical interpretation and respond in unanimous accord. As far as crime news is concerned, this usually amounts to moral indignation and censure directed at anyone who transgresses the legal or moral codes of society (p. 44).

If news stories are purposefully constructed so as to limit interpretation, and the discussions and images we see surrounding immigration and Latinos/as are repetitious in nature, the consensus we arrive at when all we hear are reports on “illegal aliens,” “border control,” “crime and violence,” and the objectification of these people as things to be protected from, is that rather than individual human beings with their own lived experiences, thoughts, wants, desires, and abilities, these people are not people at all, and do not deserve the same considerations. According to Dauber (2001, as qtd in Cisneros, 2008), these images are “presented in a context of ‘authenticity,’ [and] tend to be read not as representation but as *evidence*” (p. 573). In other words, the news is not constructing narratives and is seen as absent of any positionality or intention; these reports are read as authentic news, and thus are consumed by people as reality. The idea that that the news is providing evidence of a guilty sentence already assigned to this person just highlights again the ideology and power at play.

Citizenship

Within the discussion of “illegal alien,” the concept of citizenship is always present, particularly in the implied absence of being a citizen when using the word

“alien” or “illegal.” In the analysis of the news transcripts, whether citizenship was explicitly or implicitly stated, appearances of an us versus them rhetoric, discussion of what the news coined as “sanctuary cities,” or cities that are, in other words, light on immigration enforcement, the phrase “anchor babies” and finally, a discussion of patriotism, usually designated by a story concerning an “illegal alien” and a crime that was committed against a U.S. citizen, were themes that emerged. Cisneros (2008), in summarizing Mary Douglas, states “constructing immigration as a social danger provides an opportunity to define the other and solidify the self....discourses of danger construct difference as a means of constituting shared national and cultural identity” (p. 591). Representing Latinos/as as anchor babies, or seeking “sanctuary” from the law create metaphoric images that communicate to the public that immigrants are a drag on society, will weigh U.S. citizens down, and seek to shirk U.S. laws and customs.

Analysis of the metaphor of “sanctuary” cities uncovers not only how news media depicts Latinos/as as something other than human, here to inflict dangers on U.S. society, but also where they choose to live, if this place does not participate in the racial profiling and deportation as popularly discussed in news media, then they are deemed as part of the problem, “sheltering” these known criminals and drug lords in direct assault against U.S. policy. Cisneros (2008) also argues “their brown bodies are portrayed as dirty and dangerous because of their ethnicity. Their legal status as outsiders is marked by their sneaking and seeping through borders as well as their apprehension by law enforcement

officials” (p. 591). Coining the term “sanctuary cities” reifies the belief that Latinos/as are dirty and dangerous, and that these cities have taken in “outsiders” that do not belong.

For example, in a July 2008 Fox News broadcast with Bill O’Reilly, he reports on the “deadly chaos coming out of the sanctuary cities” and reports on places that do not cooperate with Homeland Security, and claims that, when this occurs, *real* U.S. citizens are at risk.

O'REILLY: “Impact” segment tonight, we continue our reporting on the deadly chaos coming out of the sanctuary cities. As you may know, places like San Francisco, New York, L.A. generally do not cooperate with Homeland Security when illegal aliens are arrested.

In San Francisco, 21-year-old Edwin Ramos from El Salvador was found guilty of two felonies at age 17. One was in attempted robbery of a pregnant woman. What a guy. But city authorities never reported Ramos to ICE. Even worse, Ramos was arrested again, this time on gun charges in March. San Francisco officials declined to prosecute him. They finally called ICE, which did not detain him.

Now Ramos is charged with murdering three San Franciscans. There they are: a father and two sons. The wife and mother spoke with Megyn Kelly this morning.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DANIELLE BOLOGNA, FAMILY KILLED BY ILLEGAL ALIEN: It was a senseless crime. And had they done something, this would not have taken my family.

Within this clip, what is denoted here is that a father and two sons, part of an *American* family, were “murdered” by an “illegal alien.” The implication here is that the people who were killed were worth more than the person who was responsible for the accident because they were U.S. citizens. Additionally, Bologna frames Ramos as an “animal,”

labeling him as nonhuman, which parallels using the term “alien.” It is much easier to condemn someone when they are no longer subjective or read as human. Once they become an object, it is much easier to participate in oppressive and racist assumptions and ideologies. This theme occurs continuously throughout immigration news narratives.

Furthermore, in the very beginning of the segment, O’Reilly labels New York, San Francisco, and L.A. as “sanctuary cities,” implying that these cities, known for their diversity and progressive politics, are actively working against the U.S. in immigration management and somehow allowing immigrants (read: Latinos/as) to seek refuge in their city. Because of their lax policies, San Francisco is now being punished by their “sanctuary” policy, in that three members of their city are now dead. Furthermore, these cities are allowing “outsiders” to commit heinous crimes against *real* members of the United States. O’Reilly further drives the point home when he says:

O'REILLY: The city of San Francisco is completely out of control and now is directly responsible for the murders of three men. On June 22nd, Tony Bologna and his sons, Michael, 20, and Matt, 16, were shot to death after their car came close to another car driven by illegal alien felon Edwin Ramos. Police say Ramos, a 21-year-old from El Salvador, simply pulled out a gun, killed the men. Not surprising since Ramos was arrested on a gun charge last March and had two other felony convictions. But San Franciscan authorities did not alert Homeland Security about Ramos because of the city’s sanctuary policy proudly proclaimed by Mayor Newsom.

O’Reilly then shows a clip of Mayor Newsom stating “We are standing up to say to all of our residents, we don’t care what your status is in terms of its legal certification.”

Another clip then begins:

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Has there been any acknowledgment from Mayor Newsom or the city of San Francisco officials to you of the fact that they simply reported this guy's deportation or illegal immigration status, your husband and sons might be alive today?

DANIELLE BOLOGNA, FAMILY KILLED BY ILLEGAL ALIEN: I feel that the government should have stepped in. I feel that they allowed these immigrants to come in. And how dare they strip our families like this. None of us should ever have to go through something like this. I never thought in a million years that I would be sitting here talking to you, nor having to bury three beautiful loved ones.

O'REILLY: Now how many times do we have to go through this? How many times? Mayor Newsom is partly responsible for the deaths of those three men. So are the city's supervisors, so are the folks who continue to support Newsom and his far left cadre. But we the people are also responsible for not demanding that the government protect us from harm. There's no way on this earth that millions of people should enter this country illegally. That is insane. Danielle Bologna is us. She's an American. Her life and the lives of her husband and sons were valuable and should have been protected. But they were not and no one is taking responsibility. And that's the Memo.

In O'Reilly's diatribe, multiple narratives occur: there is a clear "us versus them" rhetoric when he mentions that Ms. Bolonga is "us, an American, and that we should be protected." Bolonga's response conjures up a metaphorical image, one that places Ramos as an intruder and someone who doesn't belong in the United States; because of his presence and the inability of the U.S. government to step in, he was not only "allowed" to commit these crimes, but the implication here is that it was inevitable. This inevitability could have been avoided had the U.S. government simply "keep them out."

Further, O'Reilly implies that it was the government's patriotic duty to police "these immigrants," as well as refuse "sanctuary" of their presence, and actively seek them out to rid the city of dangerous murderers like Edwin Ramos. In framing this as a

clear divide between us, “U.S.” and them, this metaphor of a pollutant “normalizes American identity, an identity based on racial and cultural ‘purity’” (Cisneros, 2008. p.591). Ramos clearly invaded one of “our” cities, and thus “polluted” the landscape with crime and murder.

In a 2009 Fox News report, O’Reilly also reports on the solved murder of Washington intern Chandra Levy, where he states “authorities believe a violent illegal alien did it.” Further, O’Reilly goes on to say,

O'REILLY: Authorities believe 27-year-old Salvadoran illegal alien Ingmar Guandique murdered Chandra Levy. He allegedly confessed the crime to another inmate while awaiting trial. He was convicted of assaulting two other women in Washington. A few days after allegedly killing Chandra, Guandique was arrested and charged with burglary in Washington, but a hearing commissioner named Hugh Stevenson released him. ICE was not called. That is typical of sanctuary cities.

O’Reilly goes on to discuss the *New York Times* calling him a racist for “reporting the truth about illegal alien crimes” and that the media’s cover up “of alien crimes is massive.” This type of reporting is similar on other news stations, most notably CNN, particularly with anchor Lou Dobbs. In an April 2009 segment, Dobbs discusses the new Obama administration and their desire to “flood the job market with even more cheap foreign labor,” or, rather, develop a comprehensive immigration bill to address immigration concerns. Dobbs states:

DOBBS: Good evening everyone. Here we go again. The Obama administration making amnesty for illegal aliens and open borders one of its top priorities, the Obama administration has decided to bring in more foreign workers, even as

many U.S. citizens are struggling to find jobs. Also illegal aliens already in this country costing citizens billions of dollars in higher costs for health care, education, and the result of depressed wages.

Dobbs goes on to talk about Obama wanting better border security and reform to develop a pathway to citizenship, but “critics call amnesty,” and that as reported in the segment, “A Zogby poll shows almost 60 percent of Americans say amnesty for illegal aliens would harm this country” and that if “they try to grant them amnesty now, when so many Americans are struggling to get a job and put food on the table, it’s going to be mayhem,” stated by Lisa Sylvester, another CNN correspondent. The effect of this “us and them rhetoric” is to claim that there are real Americans who need jobs, and there are those coming from outside in to take away what is “rightfully” ours. According to this rhetoric, if the U.S. provides amnesty for these individuals, we are actively working against Americans and are therefore unpatriotic. This type of citizenship rhetoric creates clear sides to reduce the immigration discussion to only two sides, and simplifying the complexity of the immigrant issue, instead depending on racist and stereotypic depictions of the ‘other.’ As stated in Schemer (2012), media studies demonstrates that news breeds stereotypic attitudes and belief systems, as well as developing what is known as priming, which refers to

the activation of stereotypic cognitions in the mind of recipients in response to biased news stories about ethnic minorities. Specifically, social identity theory and self-categorization theory suggest that news portrayals of ethnic minorities automatically elicit a categorization process in which recipients perceive themselves as members of an ingroup that is dissimilar to minorities as an outgroup (...) this categorization process is contingent on the salience of

situational triggers. Such triggers may be subtle cues in the news, such as words with a racial connotation such as ‘inner-city’ or mug shots of members of racial minorities. In addition, negative depictions of minorities also function as triggers of stereotype and prejudice activation (p. 741).

In essence, there is an us and a them, and through the consumption of news narratives like the ones found on FOX and CNN, triggers such as “illegal alien” or pitting Latino/Latina immigrants against Americans in reference to an already slumping economy, will work to keep viewers from seeing immigrants, or those they deem “un-American” as any group who should be welcomed or allowed the privilege of living in the United States. Schemer (2012) goes on to write

poorly informed people may also perceive ethnic minorities as a threat because they may be competitors on the labor or housing market. As a consequence, less well-informed people may perceive members of ethnic minorities as more threatening. Given that the automatic stereotypic reaction to ethnic minorities in a news story fits into their worldview they are more likely to rely on such stereotypic attitudes when they form a judgment about them (...) in sum, the findings from the United States suggest that TV news in particular is likely to activate racial stereotypes (p. 742).

Namely, the narratives broadcasted are crucial in developing stereotypic belief systems and knowledge produced steeped in reductionist version of citizenship. In conjunction with depictions of Latinos/as as outsiders and a threat to the American way of life and citizenship, Latino/a children have also become part of the racist narratives reported in news media. They have also been labeled as “illegal aliens” or they are regulated to the stereotype that they are a tool for their parents to gain citizenship. In a July 2009 segment on FOX NEWS, also on *The O’Reilly Factor*, O’Reilly introduces his “Unresolved

Problem” segment stating “In California, it is estimated that the state spends 3.5 billion with a ‘B’ on providing illegal immigrants with entitlements, things like medical care, education and welfare payments.” O’Reilly’s guest on the show is Tony Dolz, a Taxpayer Rights activist, who is advocating for an initiative in California that would relieve the Californian taxpayer in three parts: discourage and deter birth tourism in California, “in that mothers who want to obtain a birth certificate in California will have to sign an affidavit that they are either citizens or legal residents.”

O’REILLY: All right. So you want to stop the so-called border babies who come over, the illegal aliens have their children so they’re U.S. citizens. That’s No. 1. No. 2?

DOLZ: Absolutely. No. 2 is we’re going to completely eliminate child-only welfare in California.

O’REILLY: So what does that mean? Child-only welfare is payments to the legal kids who are U.S. citizens of illegal parents?

DOLZ: It’s a payment. These are \$2 billion that are put into parents directly deposited into parents’ bank accounts.

O’REILLY: Right.

DOLZ: In order to provide for the children because they’re indigent or they have—they have no money and so on.

O’REILLY: But is there an illegal alien component there? Is it just illegal alien parents or everybody?

DOLZ: This will eliminate the program for everyone.

O’REILLY: What about those kids that are destitute, they have nothing to eat. What are you going to do?

DOLZ: Then we have to provide in the generosity of the American people as it’s always been a tradition with us, and people will turn to their churches, friends, and their families.

O'REILLY: What's No. 3?

DOLZ: Now, public benefits for illegal aliens would be eliminated, and includes prenatal care. It includes in-state tuition. It includes any benefit for which the taxpayers are paying for that is not an emergency.

O'REILLY: So emergency room still stand, but all the other payments to illegal aliens cease, but not their legal children. They could still get benefits if they needed it, like education?

DOLZ: Yes. That's—they can get a high school education.

In other words, Dolz advocates for eliminating support for children born in the United States, despite their Constitutional right to be granted all benefits of being an American citizen if their parents are not documented. Within this particular discourse, it is implied that Latinos/as are having children in the U.S. for the sole purpose of gaining citizenship, instead of immigrating for a new life experience; This also perpetuates the idea that people are sneaking over the border illegally rather than perhaps having their documentation expire; the story of illegality is the only one that is reported and acknowledged. As the discussions around immigration continue, it is evident that the ways of creating a “reality” around immigrants and their effects on the United States is growing more complex and imbedded in racist and stereotypic language and ideology. As Downing and Husband (2005) assert, “As human rights movements on a global scale have made explicit racism more universally condemned, so too have racist discourses become more sophisticated (...) the subtle framing of the racist assertion has shown its potential for legitimating the utterance of xenophobic and discriminatory arguments” (p. 8). In presenting this particular discussion as a political and economic one, the inherent

racism and dehumanization of children is cloaked. Despite the fact that these policies may seem harsh, the U.S. is still providing an opportunity for these children, whether documented or not, and whether they are children of undocumented residents or not, will still have the chance at a high school education. This positioning paints the U.S as benevolent, because we are “providing a gift” to these people, and looking past the fact that they may be, and according to news media, are likely to be in the U.S illegally. We are overlooking the law to put education first rather than choosing to be exclusionary.

Metaphoric Representation and Conclusion

In reference to metaphoric representations of Latinos/as within media, Latinos/as are represented as aliens, an alien invasion, and often times link this image with those of a flood or wave of immigrants, soon to hit the United States like a tsunami. In one of the most well known works on metaphoric representation of the Latino/a community, In *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Discourse* Otto Santa Ana (2002) states that metaphor “is more poetic color and superficial ornamentation. It shapes everyday discourse, and by this means it shapes how people discern and enact the everyday. Cicero stated that metaphor occurs ‘when a word applying to one thing is transferred to another, because the similarity seems to justify the transference’” (p. 26). In terms of immigration, these metaphoric representations suggest that Latinos/as have created their own problems by breaking U.S. laws. Because they have “chosen” to be in the U.S. illegally, the implication is that Latinos/as have made a choice and thus bear responsibility and deserve punishment for breaking U.S.

immigration laws. However, missing in this depiction is the complex variances that affect each immigrant person's lived experiences, as well as the role the U.S. has played in their need or desire to relocate to the United States. Within TV news analysis, Latino/a immigration was always construed and represented as a threat, whether it be through metaphoric labels like wave, invasion, or alien, or construing children of immigrants (or any Latino/a) as "anchor" babies, or aligning these identities with criminals and drug lords, this group of people are an outside threat to the inside of the United States, and should be eliminated. This is the main message communicated in these news transitions. As Santa Ana (2002) contends,

When alternative metaphors are rarely used to understand a social issue, then a single dominant metaphor becomes naturalized, that is, it is taken to be the one way to think about the issue. In spite of the fact all metaphors are contingent, and none is wholly accurate, in the public's view, only one comes to make sense, and no other will be admitted. The dominant way becomes the one and only, hence 'natural,' way to think about the issue (p. 53).

Within this document analysis, it is evident that the dominant way of discussing immigration lies in racist metaphoric representations and stereotypic discourse. In a news segment on CNN in August 2010, a highlighted voiceover says, "a new front is opened in the ongoing immigration reform battle in America. Is Arizona's new immigration law causing a flood of illegal immigrants elsewhere?" Further, within the same broadcast in a discussion about who should be allowed to be naturalized citizens, guest Russell Pearce argues that:

Congress had to pass three acts, one in the 1800s, the other one in 1901, the other one in 1924, giving citizenship to the Indians. There's no doubt where they were born. That's the most abused phrase in there. It says born and naturalized and for whom we have jurisdiction. We don't have jurisdiction to foreigners. We don't have jurisdiction over those who break into our country. It needs to be fixed. It's the greatest inducement. It is a crime to enter this country illegally. It's a crime to remain in this country. Yet you provide probably the greatest inducement available, an unconstitutional declaration of citizenship to those born to noncitizens.

As Pearce mentions "foreigners" who "break into" this country, the metaphoric notion of criminal and alien are at play, as well as an imbedded fear of a flood or wave that the U.S. would not be able to handle, and a fear of taking away what is, again, "rightfully" American. Additionally, Santa Ana (2002) also discusses metaphor in terms of invasion, and posits, "the features structuring the semantic domain of invasion are a subset of the domain of war. An invasion is an organized attack by armed forces with the objective of taking over" (p. 70). As he argues, this metaphor fails to take into account the history of the United States' immigration experience, where it has always been a search about freedom and employment of peaceful people.

Moreover, Santa Ana (2002) also discusses immigration as floodwaters, and states "the dangerous waters metaphors do not refer to any aspect of the humanity of the immigrants, except to allude to ethnicity or race. In contrast to such nonhuman metaphors for immigrants, U.S. society is often referred to in human terms" (p. 73). In a Fox News program with Sean Hannity in October of 2010, guests included, on the "Great Great American Panel" attorney and author of *Crimes Against Liberty* David Limbaugh and

former advisor to former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Penny Lee. Also in attendance is Dan Riehl, political consultant, blogger, and former business executive. In a beginning segment clip, the following exchange appears:

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: is she an illegal alien?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: She is not an illegal alien?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: She is not an illegal alien. She is not from another planet. She's a human being and a hardworking person.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I know she is a human being. Cut out the bull crap, lawyer to lawyer now. Is she an illegal alien, you said no.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It is not lawyer to lawyer. It is Gloria—the person who's giving—

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Gloria, is she an illegal alien or not, you said no, she's not, right?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No she is not an illegal alien. She is undocumented worker. My client is a housekeeper and some people don't respect housekeepers. I happen to respect housekeepers.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Aren't you swell, now answer my question.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I'm answering your question.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You put your client in legal jeopardy. I asked you about your client and the legal jeopardy your client is in now!

(END CLIP).

According to the transcript, this was an exchange between Mark Levin and Gloria Allred about a client. In another news segment on MSNBC with Keith Olbermann in October 2010, discussed the political race between former Senate Majority Leader Harry

Reid and Republican candidate at the time Sharron Angle, who uses an anti-immigration ad, linking Reid to illegal immigration. The commercial begins with “voting to give the illegal aliens Social Security benefits, tax breaks, and college tuition. Waves of illegal aliens streaming across our border, joining violent gangs, forcing families to live in fear.” Within this narrative of a flood or waves of dangerous immigrants forcing U.S. citizens to live in fear, Santa Ana (2002) argues that within this construction of flood waters or waves, that “one subcategory of dangerous waters is movement, which emphasizes the direction of waters, primarily northward as from Mexico to the United States. With regard to the destination of the migration, the nation is conceived as a basin or some kind of container and the migration taken to be an inward-flowing stream, in terms of *influx*” (p. 73). Within this representation, these terms do not illustrate “beneficial and enriching flows but dramatic influxes and floods that endanger the country” (p. 74).

What’s more, in creating these metaphors, like the flood or wave, or as an alien, as something coming to colonize the United States instead of become a member of it, removes all autonomy and human characteristics from immigrants, and instead “give structure to and reinforce the generally held worldview of U.S. society” (Santa Ana, 2002, p. 79).

These transcripts demonstrate that media is a powerful ideology, particularly if it is a recurring dialogue or narrative that is communicated in dominant news media and consumed regularly by a majority of U.S. citizens. The language, imagery, metaphors, and attitudes conflate to create what is read as “truth” since it is communicated through

news; the sheer name “news” communicates the idea that the information presented is factual and exists in a vacuum. It simply is. However, as demonstrated in this chapter, news is attached to ideologies, intentions, power, and racism. If these narratives continue to spread, how will immigration be seen and approached years from now, and how will we work as a collective group to live alongside those different from ourselves? What’s at stake here is more than just misinformation and cleverly disguised racism; what’s at stake is the ability to construct our own realities and lived experiences rather than allowing those with the power to report and disseminate information that is racist, inaccurate, and working to oppress marginalized groups.

CHAPTER V

TEACHING AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL: INTERVIEW FINDINGS

In 2011 the number of immigrants in the U.S. reached 40.4 million, increasing by 2.4 million since 2007. Around 11 million immigrants are in the United States without documentation, and of those 11 million, about 6.5 million are from Mexico, while 2.6 million are from Latin American nations. In 2010, there were 1 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. under the age of 18 (Pew Hispanic Center, “A Nation of Immigrants” Report, 2013). Further, according to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, of the 308.7 million people in the United States, 16 percent, or 50.5 million were categorized as of Latino descent, which has increased 3 percent, or over 15 million people since 2000. Over half of the growth in population in the U.S. is due to Latino/a self-identified people (U.S. Census, 2010). In other words, the number of people, and in particular, students who identify as Latino/a is increasing in the U.S., and by 2050, the Latino/a population will reach nearly 30 percent of the total population (U.S. Census, 2010). In other words, the presence of Latino/a populations affects the changing landscape of the United States, as well as issues concerning residents of the U.S., including education, healthcare, and everyday living experiences

Many immigrants migrate to the U.S. to achieve a more satisfying life than what they previously experienced, escaping harsh living conditions, and poverty, lack of work, or sometimes, political persecution. Some experience or witness violence and want an opportunity for a better life, one that may provide them with a chance for security and success, opportunities touted as abundant and in reach here in the U.S. (Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 22). For children of immigrants and children who are immigrants themselves, who make up over 20 percent of all youth in the U.S., the narratives and language used to discuss their experiences in both public media and classrooms affects their overall identity and development, access to education, and ability to succeed here in the United States (Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p.1). As both Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco (2001) contend, much of the literature about immigrant children, those who are foreign-born or are perceived to be foreign-born, deals with adults. Of the literature about media and immigration, most of it focuses on media representations of the Latino/a population in general, rather than about immigrant youth and how media representations may affect their experiences and identity development, especially within schools. Further, there is little to no literature dealing with how media representation and discussion around issues of immigration affect educators and support personnel within schools. As Suarez-Orozco (2001) states, “discussion around immigration have typically concentrated on policy issues and, especially, the economy. With the exception of bilingual education, the debate about immigration—as well as much of the basic research—has focused predominantly on immigrant adults,” (p. 3). However, the fastest

U.S. child population growth lies with immigrant children, those who live here unauthorized, and those who are also children of parents who are unauthorized. As Suarez-Orozo et al. (2011) state,

for children and minors, illegal status does not usually come about through their own volition; rather, it comes as a result of a decision made and actions taken by their parents or other adults. Further, even for adults, there are gray zones. Many exist in a state of 'liminal legality,' (Menjivar, 2006) with ambiguous documentation as they patiently wait in broken queues (Anderson 2009, 2010) (p.440).

As these students negotiate their liminal experiences, what are the issues and challenges in which teachers and support personnel within a school system face when working with an immigrant student population, particularly Latino/a students?

Within the U.S., undocumented Latino/a students often deal with a number of socioeconomic and psychosocial challenges, including issues of racism, prejudice, and understanding a new cultural order as well as assimilating to a new cultural aesthetic. As such, as I stated in chapter one, my questions began with exploring how news media might affect identity development of Latino/as as well as how use of language and narratives affect the stories and realities told about who immigrants are, what they value, why they're in the U.S., and this rhetoric might affect educators and support personnel.

As I attempted to contact other teachers in traditional public schools in the area, many teachers were hesitant to participate for several reasons, but perhaps the most important one I learned from an interview with a woman named Maria who worked in a

support capacity in a school system in rural North Carolina. She was a Latina woman from New York, who grew up as a child of an immigrant. Her office was housed in what looked like a fall-out shelter or military base from the 50s or 60s, a half-moon shaped aluminum building that was surrounded by gravel and no defined parking spaces. On the day of our meeting, when I walked in the office and asked for Maria, I sat in a sofa that had seen newer days. The office was without windows, and across the main waiting area was torn and tattered posters about ESL programs, pictures of Latino/a, Asian, and Middle-Eastern children playing on swings, or reading books. A particle board brochure holder sat next to the same kind of bookshelf, housing information about finding an apartment, getting food stamps, where to find government assistance, and how to apply to schools. They looked weathered and sun-drenched, faded in areas and folded. They seemed to have been sitting there awhile. When Maria finally came in to meet me and call me back, she quickly popped her head around the corner to tell me “hello” and to go ahead and meet her down in her office, room 152. We sat down at a small round table that was perched in front of her oak desk. The chairs reminded me of brightly colored school chairs for children, and this made sense since she worked with both students and families most of the time.

As we sat in her office, a small space with no windows, a traditional desk with neat piles of folders and notes, she looked me in the eye to tell me about her experience as someone who oversees over 6,000 students in an ESL program, with a staff of twelve, 125 teachers, and six interpreters. I could tell what we were talking about was important

and, by default, confidential. I was ready to take notes, as she did not want to be recorded. She was stern as she said,

We're not allowed to ask if a student is documented or undocumented. Everyone is entitled to a free education from age 5 to age 21. If a student comes in, they register, and we can't ask if they're undocumented. We gather paperwork and send a folder with them to the school. We work with the community, trying to maneuver around the system. But no one reports about undocumented students because we do not and cannot know. They are not supposed to tell us. And the main perception that is so harmful is that they think we are all from Mexico and all undocumented. I'm from New York, and it is so different from here. So blended, so pronounced, in your face.

This was an ah-ha moment for me. Perhaps this was why teachers were not responding to my queries. If they're not allowed to talk about their students, documented or not, was there fear in doing so? The issue of documentation, whether or not these students and their parents were 'authorized' to be in the United States was a major theme in my interviews, specifically for the folks who worked with students who either are themselves or come from a family of undocumented citizens. This relates back to my previous chapter on news analysis; one of the many themes that emerged was racist assumptions about who Latino/as are, and where they're from; what's even more telling is that Maria also realizes that the same perception of her students and families she works with exists: that they are all undocumented.

At the end of the day, however, students may be fearful of being deported, having their families deported, and with the growing megalomania surrounding immigration and those of Latino/a descent in Arizona, Texas, and others, it is no wonder both students and

teachers are wary of discussing the topic. As Peguero and Bondy (2010) contend, “Racial and ethnic minority students indeed place more value on the teacher’s perception of themselves; unfortunately, racial and ethnic minority students believe that they are unfavorably viewed and discriminated against by teachers, especially in relation to their educational capabilities and potential” (p. 166). Due to this precarious relationship, students may feel uncomfortable around their teachers or other support personnel and this in turn affects the way they may relate and connect with their Latino/a youth. What remains unclear, as Peguero and Bondy suggest, is how much this problematic relationship contributes to the educational gap in this country, and the quality of relationships these students do have with their educators (p. 166). Thus, my study branched out to include members of the school community who work with Latino/a youth in multiple capacities, not just as teachers. However, the information gathered within my research can be applied to an overall understanding of the obstacles Latino/a youth face, as well as identify the patterns that can be traced back to media consumption and generalized cultural narratives disseminated throughout the United States about who Latino/a people are, as well as what it means to be an immigrant. In other words, through my research, I hoped to reveal some of the main themes that emerge for Latino/a youth in schools, and how those are attached to the grand, harmful narratives that spread from news media representations, portrayals, and consumption and how those may be tied to the themes that emerged in my document analysis.

The patterns that developed in the research deals explicitly with the challenges Latino/a youth face in relation to school: enrolling, participating, learning, and accessing resources in order to have a chance at a life not relegated to working class or low-wage positions, as well as a life free from narratives surrounding criminality, prejudice, racism, and growing anti-immigrant laws and policies.

According to researchers Richard C. Cervantes and David Cordova (2011), recent epistemological studies indicate that “a majority of nonimmigrant Hispanic adult populations report higher rates of mental health problems,” but what about the experiences of Latino/a adolescents? (p.336). Within their research, Cervantes and Cordova, in using the framework of Social Stress Theory, assert that social organization plays a “significant role in the origins and consequences of stressful life experiences” and “disenfranchised populations might experience increased stress because of the inequalities found in the social organization in which the individual or family is embedded” (p. 337). Scholars argue that racial and ethnic discrimination is a major life stressor for minority groups within the United States (Cervantes and Cordova, 2011, p. 337). Furthermore, racial and ethnic discrimination has been linked to psychological stress and depression, and for Latino/a populations, they confront several additional stressors such as increased poverty rates, language barriers, and immigration challenges. To complicate this matter further, exposure to these types of stressors has also been found to be traumatizing and can possibly contribute to the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (Cervantes and Cordova, 2011, p. 338).

Stereotypes, Media and Racial Tension

According to Perez and Cortes (2011), studies concerning undocumented Latino/a students in the United States and Canada found that social isolation and uncertainty surrounding their documented status often significantly contributed to their social stress and immigration experience (p. 18). A study conducted by Arbonna et. al (2010) found that about one-third of undocumented Latino/a youth reported avoiding activities such as requesting assistance from government facilities for fear of deportation, and furthermore, are pervasively affected by “exploitation and vulnerability; physical, mental, and emotional hardships” (Perz and Cortes, 2011, p. 19). These fears seem to be well founded, based on what arose within my interviews. Additionally, one of the main themes that developed in the interviews was the presence of stereotypical and racist thoughts and beliefs, and behaviors on the part of administration and/or staff and peers, which supports Perez and Cortes’ findings; this also links back to chapter four as well through the metaphoric representation as well as stereotypes and racist descriptions. For teachers and administrators who assist Latino/a students in negotiating their lives within American public schools, they are acutely aware of the racism and anti-immigrant sentiment in somewhat rural settings within a southern state. Maria has worked for over ten years with both documented and undocumented Latino/a youth, and tells us about what these students deal with on a daily basis.

Their classmates call them things like ‘wetback’ or ‘strawberry picker’ or ‘bean picker.’ These are things their classmates hear and see in the media. I believe it is

the system itself; it's systemic racism. When I interpret for my students it depends on the school system and individual at the front desk. Sometimes they are plain racist and don't even like Latinos. They will try to sabotage the student.

For Maria, not only does she work to translate and advocate on behalf of these students, she also works with teachers to design and implement language learning and after-school programs to assist Latino/a students learning English with their English language acquisition, peer development and connection. However, when Latino/a students are isolated from schools due to personal and systemic racist belief systems when they try to register in a school or follow the school's rules in order to become a student, (Federal mandates state that all children up to age 21 are allowed in schools), the challenges become even more daunting. Further, Maria acknowledges here that the racist name-calling stems specifically from media coverage and rhetoric used to describe Latino/as. The terms used to marginalize and oppress Latino/a students are stereotypes, and based on assumptions and biases that likely originate from something the student has heard or repeated from their parents or news media rhetoric they have consumed. As Perez and Cortes (2011) argue, "experiencing discrimination has become a familiar pattern for undocumented Latino students. They carry the burden of 'a triple minority status' in that they're a target for discrimination based on their ethnic background, lack of legal status, and economic disadvantages, all of which pose great socioemotional stress" (p. 54). Many of these hurdles, unfortunately, are at the administrative level and are embedded within a process like enrolling in school. Maria recounted a number of stories of parents running up against racism in trying to register for school, or asking for information that is

illegal and unnecessary to provide. According to Maria, in doing this, administrative folks in schools are trying to “catch” undocumented families so they can turn them over to ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement). The idea of “catching” someone implies that the ones trying to “catch” believe that the person in front of them is “illegal,” an assumption frequently made in news media rhetoric as evidence in chapter four.

Schools aren’t supposed to ask for SS#s. I received a call from a woman who wanted to enroll her child in a school system. She went to the school asking for information and they asked her to provide a SS# or a TAX ID#. She called me and I called the administration to verify this was a new policy, and they said no, it wasn’t. It was a case of someone in the office being racist. They target Latinos: we are the larger minority now. They put Latino immigrants all in one group: they think we are all from Mexico, and think we are all terrorists.

This doesn’t just happen in schools. Maria also discussed many times that the families she works with fight against racism in their daily lives, trying to become a part of their communities. Often, people make assumptions about a person’s documented status simply by the way they speak, if they have an accent, or “look” Latino/a.

One of my parents called a local cable company. She went to get services and they reported the woman to the police who called ICE. She’s in the process of deportation. She called first to the company to ask for services and they asked her for a social security #. She was set up. They told her to come into the office, and when she did, they called the police and the police called ICE. Once she supplied the ID# she had, they could charge her with fraud.

Furthermore, on a daily basis outside of Maria’s office, a county building, families coming in to ask about enrolling their children in school have learned not to come to the office during certain times of the day; in the early mornings between 8:00am

and 10:00am and in the afternoon, between 4:00pm and 6:00pm. When I asked Maria why this was, she said that police officers in her county know that undocumented families come in to get assistance for their children, and they sit outside on the road outside her office in order to catch undocumented citizens if they break any traffic laws. “They’re out looking for them,” she says, her head shaking back and forth. Chavez (2008) speaks about this constant state of fear surrounding Latino/as that he calls The Latino Threat Narrative, which,

as a discourse, is an example of Michel Foucault’s notions of knowledge and power. The objects of this discourse are represented as the Other and as a ‘threat’ and ‘danger’ to the nation through such simple binaries of citizen/foreigner, real Americans/ ‘Mexicans’ or real Americans/ ‘Hispanics’, natives/enemies, us/them, and legitimate/illegal (p.41).

As a teacher in the United States, Lupe tells about her experiences as a woman from Puerto Rico who gets profiled regularly.

As a Hispanic female here in the south, I’m more likely to get profiled, or get asked more questions. Every time I’m pulled over, I’m asked where I’m from; I’ve gotten a ticket because the cop said ‘I can’t understand this Mexican lady.’ I do have issue with this and it’s crazy that they’re allowing this in Arizona. In school, teachers and students ask me if I speak Mexican; it’s clear they aren’t educated on other immigrants, at all, and it’s an issue. We don’t really take this issue into consideration, and there’s a lot of division between the school, and even between the teachers, being comfortable with each other, and others say that I’m Mexican to *other* teachers but you don’t know. You don’t even know me. I think the media has a lot to do with it. They specify Mexicans, or Mexican workers, they just hear the word ‘Mexican’ all the time, if you look or speak Spanish-‘oh they’re Mexican’ but I would hope most of the teachers aren’t saying ‘oh they speak Spanish they must be Mexican.’ So, I just let them know I speak Spanish, I’m not Mexican, I’m Puerto Rican, from Latin America, and that Puerto Rico is a

commonwealth, and I'll show them on a map. I try to discuss this with them, and show that there are different countries with Latino and Hispanic descent.

Researcher Bonnie Urciuoli (2009) addresses this experience as she writes

Judgments of what sounds like 'normal' English are generated over a range of public discourses; cumulatively and performatively, they marginalize all nondominant varieties marked by race or class. The marginalization of working-class, Spanish-marked English is, in terms of cultural dynamics, of a piece with the marginalization of African-American-marked varieties of English. The issue is that of markedness: the construction of a 'white public space' of language depends on the continued interpretation of certain language forms as not 'fitting in,' so that the ongoing markedness of certain forms continually regenerates the unmarkedness—the normativeness of the whole (p. 154).

To put it another way, Latino/as people, not only by the color of their skin but also through use of language and dialect, may be marginalized by other students, teachers, and co-workers and peers and marked by their difference, both in usage and in appropriation; marginalization reinforces the normalization of white spaces, particularly in the United States, that teaches these students that being white and speaking English in a specific way is not only important, but necessary for acceptance and success. To acknowledge that marginalization reifies white spaces as normal is important here as a white researcher; to recognize my own whiteness through my theoretical framework is to admit that in the act of marginalizing Latino/as in news media, the spaces I occupy are normalized. Therefore, to work toward making this process of reification known is where seeing and admitting whiteness isn't done to be what Audrey Thompson (2003) calls a "good white," but rather to show how the acknowledgment of whiteness can help demonstrate how

whiteness and white supremacy works in making the process of marginalization and oppression easier to accomplish.

Echoed further in the research conducted by Eschback and Gomez (1998) who investigated Latino/a youths' tendency to "switch from a Hispanic identification to a non-Hispanic one" found that "those youth who spoke only English and those who attended school with few other Hispanic youth tended to drop their Hispanic identification over two years in high school" (p. 85). That is to say, Latino/as, generally, came to disavow their culture of origin and their ethnic identity due to repeated lack of understanding and lack of attempt to understand their origin identities as part of their whole selves.

Sara, a woman who works for a non-profit designed to meet the needs of Latino/a families in the community resonates with these experiences.

Many Americans never get out of America; they don't have any concept of globalization and are ignorant which grows into anti-immigrant sentiment...and I think people are being influenced by the media, websites that discriminate and spread false information about Latinos. For example, in a local county a film was created and produced about the border between U.S. and Mexico. It depicted illegals coming here to take our community, it was horrible. The information was wrong and they didn't use any facts. The language they used...they call it 'illegal' immigrant. This message is being said and that we are all criminals, rapists, and murderers. Even government offices use the terms like 'illegal' and 'criminal' and our Congressmen and women use the term so loosely. In the election process even. Representatives and governments and media use the term even though we said there is no such thing as an 'illegal' person.

Sara also admits that media influences how Latino/as are read and understood in her description of a film created to spread false information about a particular group. This

aligns with what was occurring in FOX News transcripts; clearly this group mentioned here as a particular ideology combined with white power and is a clear demonstration of, again, Delpit's culture of power described in chapter one.

Additionally, according to Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001), immigrant children develop an acute sense of identifying issues of race and the difference of color in U.S. culture. "Immigrant children of color know that many in the dominant culture do not like them or welcome them (...) when the expectations are of sloth, irresponsibility, low intelligence, and even danger, the outcome can be discouragement. When these reflections are received in a number of mirrors including the media, the classroom, and the street, the outcome can be psychological devastation" (p. 98-99). Within the depictions of Latino/a peoples in news media, there is a link between what is disseminated in popular media and culture that gets transmitted into the experiences of educators and support personnel. Here's where the rhetoric in chapter four appears within lived experiences. This information is overwhelmingly steeped in racist and stereotypical misinformation that has real, lasting, and harmful consequences.

Education, Policy, Connection, and Support

As the U.S. becomes more connected to a global economic market and system, education becomes more important than ever before. Many immigrant parents bring their children to the United States for a chance at a better life, and this includes a shot at a good education. This often incorporates a focus on learning English and going to college, and these parental attitudes are often passed down to their children. As Peguero and

Bondy (2011) argue, “studies reveal that students’ relationship with teachers is an important factor toward improving educational achievement, motivation, cognitive, emotional, and social development, prosocial behavior, and self-esteem” (p. 166). Furthermore in Peguero and Bondy’s study, the race of a student is crucial in the relationship between teacher and student. Additionally, racial and ethnic minority students often tend to place more significance on the teacher’s perception of them, and “unfortunately, racial and ethnic minority students believe that they are unfavorably viewed and discriminated against by teachers, especially in relation to their educational capabilities and potential” (p. 166). Though relationships with teachers and support personnel are esteemed in establishing values and ideologies of the school, an increase in student achievement and success, it is often reported that racially minority students are given “less attention, guidance, care, and support in comparison with their White American counterparts” (Peguero and Bondy, 2011, p. 167). For Latino/a students, immigrants or native-born, it is often true that immigrant children or children of immigrants are marginalized and often placed below their native-born counterparts; “often placed in classes or academic tracks far below the mainstream classes (...) and subjected to negative treatment such as discrimination, ridicule, and harassment from other students, teachers, and school administrators, consequently, other research has indicated that immigrant children believe that their schools are unsafe” (Peguero and Bondy, 2011, p. 168). Furthermore, many teachers who are unfamiliar with these challenges become frustrated with immigrant students, revealing negative attitudes and

ambivalence. This can be attributed to large class sizes, low salaries, and increasing demands on teachers particularly due to policies such as No Child Left Behind; however, this is also a result of how dominant culture views Latino/a students in U.S. culture. This is somewhat demonstrated in the perspective of a white teacher in a rural town in the south, Anne, who commented on her understanding of “illegal” and the policies surrounding immigration.

I understand people’s anger and frustration; the Constitution is precious and I think those two things are key. I don’t approve of targeting certain people by the way they look; I guess I have mixed views. If on the news they mention ‘illegal aliens’ most folks have a sense or idea that they mean Hispanics and they are illegal. But the Asians or Africans probably aren’t thought of that way. I don’t understand why we have so many illegal immigrants, or understand the policy, and I don’t know what’s contributing to it. I don’t think my kids or parents know and whatever’s happening I wish someone would explain it.

One of the main factors that contributes to Latino/a youth and the difficulties they face is the misunderstanding and sometimes racially charged viewpoints of their teachers. The statement from Anne clearly identifies a white teacher who may want to do “good” for her students, but is fundamentally misinformed and unaware of her whiteness, and how that confounded with her beliefs in the Constitution (what is legal and not) may be harming her Latino/a students. The information she does reference includes “illegal aliens,” the difference of thought between “Asians and Africans” and Latino/a peoples. She knows there is an influx of immigrants and buys into the metaphors so frequently associated with immigration (flood, wave). Frequently, it’s on the part of the advocate for the student, an ESL teacher, a social worker, or some other school affiliate that needs to

push for support for these students. They often face, as mentioned earlier, an irritated or disconnected teacher who may look at these students as additional hurdles that need to be jumped. Sara, a local advocate for Latino/a families, recounts her experience with a family where she had to intervene.

Counselors do not play a good role. A lack of information on part of the parents and the confusion of the child, the parents don't speak English and the child does, they have more control. But the parents are still the parents. They have a right to make appointments with teachers and counselors, and they don't know they can do that. I had a mother who couldn't get answers from the school counselors about her child so I went to talk to the team working with her child and the counselor was just like "one more student," that kind of attitude and just wanted to do the traditional checklist. They were a frustrated counselor. But we pushed and pushed and finally, we got access to other resources and help for the student to try and go to college.

Again, we have a counselor who has a lack of information about Latino/a students; the information they do have is likely the same information transmitted from news media, like assuming that the Latino/a student has no interest in college, that they are undocumented, or that their future may include criminal acts or drugs; the information purported on these news networks is not comprehensive, informative, or helpful. Instead it is reductionist and ideologically dense.

Furthermore, this is also an issue of access and opportunity that is often tied in to documentation. As Suarez-Orozco et al. (2011) reminds us, documentation is a multifaceted process and experience, and is more than just whether a parent or student has documentation or not. She states, "liminality has been theorized as the transitional moment between spheres of belonging when social actors no longer belong to the group

they are leaving behind and do not yet fully belong in their new social sphere” (p. 444).

In other words, the students who do not yet have legal authorization as far as citizenship goes are within the border between where they are and where they’re trying to go.

Additionally, students who are citizens but are members of families with undocumented members constantly negotiate this for their parents and families as well as for themselves, often being read automatically as someone who is Latino/a and therefore, “illegal.” Maria references the issue of having counselors as well, and those with papers and those without.

The students with documents have different experiences from those who don’t. They already have counselors and know what to do. The ones who don’t have the most challenging situation; they don’t have access to higher education; they don’t know the components, and the parents don’t know what they need to do.

Similarly, Anne expresses her own difficulty as a teacher who is unfamiliar with who her immigrant students are, what they need, and why. She seems to be disconnected from their experience and is unsure how to work to further her understanding.

I wish they would keep them there [at the school specifically designed to receive immigrants and refugees to the United States] so they would have better language skills when they got here. If they’re going to be here we need to educate them; they get angry when they don’t get things like in-state tuition; if [they are] here, [and] are going to live here, the safest thing for everyone is educating even if people don’t want to educate. keep hearing conflicting stories about illegals receiving government benefits but I just don’t know the details. I just don’t talk about immigration. I don’t know who’s legal and who’s not and it’s a highly sensitive topic for students so I just avoid it.

Not only are Latino/a students facing barriers with their teachers, they also experience disconnection and hostility often from their peers, particularly once they enroll in U.S. high schools. According to Bonnie Uriuoli (2006), “prejudices faced by US Latino/as are continually reinforced by judgments generated in public discourses” as we have seen in public media dissemination (p. 171). These prejudices are often reinforced and repeated through peers, and their understanding of who Latino/a students are and what they are capable of. Anne talks about what she sees in the hallways of her school, a predominantly rural, white high school that was built only four years ago, but resides in between small towns in the south.

I hear the students say things and the native kids talk about how they can't stand them [Hispanics], say things like “go back where you came from,” and say that “illegal immigrants” are bad. Native speakers of English don't know how to communicate so they just ignore the students who can't speak English. But I think it depends on where they're from. Who are the biggest pains in the butts? Latin American boys, behaviorally; there is something going on with that group. What it is and how to address it? I don't know. They have a lack of participation, discipline problems, are disrespectful. I never had any other types of immigrants be disrespectful at all. I don't see them trying to assimilate or acculturate—they see how they're supposed to act in movies, and gangs.

In Anne's experience, the contention she describes seems to be an issue of assimilation and acculturation; Latino/a immigrants are often negotiating multiple factors, not just a new school, but are sometimes also in the process of shifting between lived experiences, like switching to a different school that includes racist white students and misinformed and uneducated teachers and staff. Additionally, Anne has bought into the language and

representation of Latino/as, singling out Latino boys as “discipline” problems, but failing to acknowledge the racism exhibited by her white students. Instead of questioning what she’s labeling as “behavior” problems, she assumes their behavior is linked to their disposition as Latino/a. However, she fails to engage issues of difference, as well as the experiences of her Latino students in a predominantly white school. What she is assuming is a problem in behavior may in fact stem from the student’s reacting to their racist peers, as well as her own racism toward those particular students. For Latino/as, “acculturation of Hispanics was associated with cultural awareness, reflecting the way in which culture-of-origin characteristics are maintained in the context of contact with another cultural group” (Quintana and Scull, 2009, p. 85). In other words, how Latino/a students who were not born in the U.S. negotiate the acculturation process into the United States is contingent on how they maintain their previous experiences from where they were born, what they experience at home, and their new surroundings and expectations. Further, “the more children are exposed to Latino culture and people, the more likely they are to identify with their ethnic heritage, and the more children are exposed to Anglo culture and people, the less likely they are to identify as Latino” (Quintana and Scull, 2009, p.85). For Latino/a students who experience a disconnection between themselves and their teachers and peers, will more likely feel pressure to shift their identities to reflect their new environment and culture, which can often stem from the social media narratives consumed by those who participate in creating U.S. school culture. All these

students see, unless they watch particular channels specifically targeted to Latino/a culture, are narratives and rhetoric that marginalize, demonize and oppress them.

Lupe also, as a teacher, feels these pressures both for herself and for her students.

I think there is misinformation in the media; it's not being clarified as to what Hispanic or Latino is—focusing on Mexicans—they never mention other countries, so students and adults just think 'Mexican.' But, I try to make sure that I'm providing the Hispanic students with services, like phone calls from families, I translate and explain and answer questions. I feel like, 'yes, I'm Hispanic and successful' and kids think they have middle and high school education so why do I need more? I want them to do well. They are capable of more than they think they are. I just want more acceptance. They [undocumented and documented Latinos and Hispanics] are doing a lot of jobs we don't want to do. Trying to be successful, and there are benefits to the economy, and we need to educate students and explore diversity in schools. Kids have no idea what cultures and languages there are. Let's help people to be able to be U.S. citizens. They are scared to show and ask for help or assistance. If they get kicked back from where they're from, what are they supposed to do?

In the same way that Latino/a youth experience a lack of support and connection with teachers, administrators, and racism by their peer group, so do Latino/a adults. Lupe recognizes the fallout from teacher and student attitudes, and as Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) argue, "the kind of love and reverence of school that immigrant children demonstrate may not always be enough to outweigh the multiple challenges and obstacles they typically encounter" (p. 128). In other words, we need more than love and affection. Additionally, Lupe pinpoints the media and its misinformation when it comes to Latino/a lived experience. As evidenced in the news analysis, when Latino/a

experience is mentioned (almost always in conjunction with immigration) it is often conflated into the umbrella label of “Mexican.” This goes back to the geographical concern of border states like Arizona and Texas with Mexico. The assumptions being made in Lupe’s school is directly tied to the narratives and assumptions espoused in U.S. news media.

So, what is needed is for teachers, administrators, tutors, and/or negotiators to gain support, opportunity and a paradigm shift in the way we approach immigration and more specifically, Latino/a immigrant students. As Maria states when I ask her about the obstacles her students face, she says

This kind of stuff affects drop out rates, affects behaviors in the classroom, and parents don’t want to come check on their kids because they are afraid they will be kicked out of school or found out. We’re not allowed to ask for papers. But they can’t make it without an education. Just the terms ‘alien’ and ‘illegal’ are a negative way of labeling a person and they think ‘outer space’ and they think we don’t belong here, allowing an interpretation and violence, negativity, and they want these people to get out or if they don’t people will become violent or turn to violence and it’s inhumane. It’s society’s way of belittling them—what better way to keep them in their place than to belittle them? And as far as teachers, I would say that no, teachers are not willing to help these students. They reach out to me because I’m more than willing to do it. But there’s so much work they should have been doing already with these students.

As someone who works as not only someone who works with tutors and community members for Latino/a students in her school district, but also as an advocate, she sees the connection between language and reality, and the repercussions of failing to call out these

connections or the failure in doing anything about them. Education is at stake here for these students; but more than that, their safety and ability to live and experience an education as a basic right as well as their safety is tied up in these policies, dominant narratives and attitudes. Maria recognizes the control of dominant ideologies and those in power when she questions “what better way to keep them in their place than to belittle them?”

As for the teachers who are not willing to help, the structure of schools, particularly in the West, is based on the “do-it-yourself” method as well as a culture of testing. Many teachers buy into this method, and may also be overwhelmed with high enrollment in their courses, a full course load, and demands from both their own school and testing demands that are federally mandated. However, as schools and the United States continue to grow more diverse, our schools should reflect these changes within our diversity and language. The first step is to recognize these missteps and their consequences. Maria discusses the roadblock these attitudes set up for Latino/a youth:

I believe the disconnection starts in elementary school: sometimes there’s a gap between Latino families and high schools. Our schools are based on a Western style which is independent. It’s different from schools in Latin America and Mexico: their parents receive reports and here it’s disconnected, it’s not that way. They [parents] don’t know how the system works. Parents themselves didn’t go to school and many only have a 6th grade education and they don’t understand or comprehend what to do to help youth in high schools. Parents are depressed. We came here to provide better opportunities to our children. It hurts them. Really, schools try to look at other options than taking in these students because they think they can’t or won’t graduate—sometimes they don’t if they turn 21 before they finish. This hurts their funding and accreditation. However, they are legally obligated to allow these students to attend school until age 21.

Because schools are modeled on a Western, individualistic framework for education, this creates a gap for Latino/a youth, one particularly that is made more difficult by lack of information and training on the part of the staff and educators, but also due to legal issues concerning undocumented Latino/a youth and accessing higher education. As Perez and Cortes (2005) document in their research on undocumented Latino/a students, often advocates have to overcome institutional and federal obstacles that can keep undocumented students from getting aid or assistance for college, or the ability to go to college at all. They state,

One of the challenges of increasing financial support for students on campus is a concern about breaking the law. When a student organization at Linda's institution tried to set up a scholarship program, the financial aid office said it was illegal to specify that it was only for undocumented students. They had to reword the eligibility language to include other students. Another strategy that Linda described her institution employs is using the FAFSA with undocumented students with unrestricted institutional aid (p.123)

For these students, undocumented or not, access to education is already rife with traps, fears of getting arrested or "caught," as well as encountering racism at the institutional level through administrators and teachers, as well as staff and peers. Further, it's a constant negotiation and without someone who is aware of these traps and has the know how to maneuver around them, without this kind of ally, education becomes more unreachable.

Maria discusses these complications with the students she works with, noting that many of them, while gifted, excelled in school, and overcame obstacles that Latino/a immigrant students face, still weren't able to attend college or higher level learning.

Several students right out of high school just went to work with their fathers and work under the table. Six families decided to send their children back to Mexico to go to university there and some families can't even do that. They don't speak Spanish because their children have grown up here in the United States. Some can't even read or write in Spanish. In some cases, students go to community colleges but they have to pay out of state tuition or international rates and it's much higher in cost. One student got accepted to a local university but has to go one semester, take one semester off to earn money, and then go the next semester.

Sara also had experiences with the students and families she works with having to confront issues of access and opportunity as well. As stated by Peguero and Bondy (2011),

within a conventional assimilation paradigm, it is suggested that as the children of immigrants, regardless of their race and ethnicity, adapt to the dominant host group's culture, values, and norms, they will develop an appreciation and attachment to formal education and achieve academic success. The realities of such assertions do not hold up within this study (p.177).

It seems, according to Maria that some students are succeeding in schools but then experience barriers with access to further education and employment. Students may not develop appreciation or attachment to education, perhaps because they experience racism, lack of trust, support, and understanding on the part of their new culture and schools, as well as a popular rhetoric of "illegality," one that repeatedly underscores their lack of

personhood. Maria recounts her experience with these barriers as she tells of a teacher whose hands were tied in helping their undocumented Latino/a student to succeed.

I had a teacher who had a student who was second in his class in Automotive, and he was undocumented. And the teacher wanted to help him receive more training or certification and he can't because he's undocumented. There is nothing we can do if they are undocumented. There is nowhere to go. It's a lot easier if children are American citizens—we can get assistance for them. The laws aren't going to change any time soon though—they are so restrictive and tight—the DREAM ACT would help our kids though. It should be about helping our kids.

Maria has similar experiences working with her families and student population in her capacity as someone who works within the school system. As she references these students as “our kids,” it is clear that students who face barriers to education are those who are suffering at the hands of racist dominant ideologies. Maria explains how these obstacles affect the community she works with:

Not being able to help when these kids and families have needs is the hardest thing. It's not that they're not trying; they are trying to work. For example, I have a mother who was arrested, and the children are being taken care of by neighbors—sometimes our hands are tied when it comes to helping because of the laws and rules. If they are undocumented there is nothing; we can try to work with agencies the best we can. We try to help both personally and help together.

For Latino/a students, it is clear that they face many hurdles when it comes to accessing education, gaining support and advocacy, and navigating the policies and laws that dictate their accessibility and success. But more than that, we are failing these students, and if we are to tout ourselves as a nation that cares about its citizens and residents,

documented or not, then we must begin to care about the access, opportunity, and needs of Latino/a youth.

Furthermore, the links between the experiences for these teachers and support staff and what they see occurring for their Latino/a students has direct correlation with media narratives exposed in chapter four. As Mastro et al (2008) contends, “the effects of exposure to these images have been an issue of longstanding concern—particularly when considering that for many White Americans, a bulk of information about Latinos comes from mass media” (p.2). Mastro et al (2008) goes on to state that research shows that when the majority (Whites) consume stereotypical images and representations of Latino/a and Hispanic people, negative judgments form, often coupled with “unsympathetic race-related policy preferences” (p.2). For Latino/as, whether documented or not, the stereotype of automatically being undocumented is tied into their brown skin, and because of this, are legislated and policed with regard to access to education and mobility. This conflation of skin tone and worthiness that is tied to documentation can be traced directly back to news media narratives.

Identity, Assimilation and Advocacy

In the early part of the twentieth century, the idea of assimilation grew within schools as these educational systems worked to address the Mexican community as it was “more rural, separate, and identifiable than it is today,” to construct a “cultural demarcation between a superior and an inferior culture,” (Gonzalez, 1997, p.163). Put

another way, this involved the erasing of any language or cultural differences that were considered undesirable in the quest for Americanizing children to reflect a

single homogenous culture. The dominant community, enjoying greater wealth and privileges, claimed its position by virtue of alleged cultural superiority. In one way or another, nearly every Mexican child, whether born in the United States or in Mexico, was treated as a 'foreigner,' as an alien, and as an intruder (Gonzalez, 1997, p. 163).

The objective for America at the beginning of the twentieth century was to assimilate Mexican youth to speak English and think American. Furthermore, these programs were based on stereotypical assumptions that Mexicans were “dirty, shiftless, lazy, irresponsible, unambitious, thriftless, fatalistic, selfish, promiscuous, and prone to drinking, violence, and criminal behavior” (Gonzalez, 1997, p. 163). These stereotypes have endured through the twenty-first century, and have extended to include anyone who might match the stereotypical representations of “Mexican” in the media: darker skinned with an accent. As my media analysis examines, images and narratives surrounding Latino/a people are overwhelmingly negative, focusing on specific cases of drinking, car accidents, criminal activity, assault or murder to generalize about an entire race of people from a vast and varied array of Latin American countries. As Angharad N. Valdivia (2010) asserts, “when a group of people are under-represented and, furthermore, sensationalized, victimized, or ridiculed, there are political, health, and educational results” (p. 70-71). Furthermore, when a group of people are represented and are done so only through lenses of criminalization or marginalization, that when “under-represented

people appear, they are further marginalized through pejorative representation—for example, on the very few occasions that Latina/o youth are represented in the news, they tend to be represented as deviants” (p. 82). This mentality is evident in the interviews conducted with my participants. For Sara, someone who consistently works with Latino/a youth, their families, and assists in navigating the social and cultural landscape of a rural American town in the south, it’s clear that these representations are being internalized for Latino/a youth and for their peers who already hold citizenship.

Youth are angry and confused. They don’t want to be related to anything Latino or Hispanic—they just want to adopt the American way. It’s too bad because we should and could be building a bi or trilingual nation and community. We don’t have an understanding of globalization. There are over 170 languages spoken in schools here. How can we help or create students who can be competitive in the global market?

In other words, Sara recognizes that there is value in diversity, particularly recognizing that becoming multi or tri-lingual could not only be good for students in their education, but can also be helpful skills if the U.S. is going to be a player in a global economy, a narrative that is often espoused and encouraged among dominant narratives about education. There is a disconnect here then, in what the focus of school for economic prosperity and the policies and treatment of students different than the narrowly defined “American.” How might these students be recognized in the skills they have that may be different from what is traditionally taught and reinforced in American schools? Additionally, what value would be found in encouraging our Latino/a youth to shirk their cultural backgrounds and experiences?

Maria also has the same difficulties in dealing with her own students and families as they try to steer their way into the school system of which they have every right, all the while fighting against racist language and imagery.

When someone says ‘I have an *illegal* student’ I correct them and make a point to say ‘undocumented.’ When they [politicians, fellow teachers] talk about immigration they talk about what is bad—and not the positive of immigration and what it has contributed to the country. I’m not happy with how it’s going. The language that’s used just creates Band-Aids for these problems and it’s so confusing, even for people trying to help. They just have a ‘gang perception’ of these students, and we need a culture change.

As someone who is embedded in both the school system and the experiences of these students and families, Maria further laments the lack of education of those she works with and under. For Lupe, she recognizes the misinformation circulated:

They don’t realize why Latinos are coming to the United States. All the U.S. trade agreements that are making Mexico poor are coming from the United States. Our federal government isn’t handling immigration well, and so they pass it down to the local government, they don’t know anything, they just don’t know, so it’s so complicated. Like, there are different VISAS. They just say ‘get in line’ and geographically, building a wall between Mexico and the U.S., if it’s really for our security, then where’s the wall between Canada and the U.S.? They say we’re draining the system, and it’s just not true.

The ideology behind assimilation assumes that those who immigrate to the United States can move from their original position in society to a higher one in the hierarchy of success; that the faster they assimilate the faster they will be successful, the faster they learn English and adopt new “American” traditions, the more likely they will adopt

mainstream culture and mobility. However, this pattern has changed. According to Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001), the reasons for this shift vary.

The changing nature of the opportunity structure plays a fundamental role. So does the quality of the infrastructure, including schools and social services available to ease the transition. Race and color are important features differentiating this wave of immigration from earlier waves dominated by European origin populations. Enduring racial tensions and ethnic stereotypes are powerful constraints that all immigrants of color must contend with (p. 91-92).

Furthermore, it may be that the urge to establish an identity is more pronounced in adolescence. It is the “single greatest developmental task of adolescence (...) to forge a coherent sense of identity. For optimal development (...) there needs to be a good fit between the individual’s sense of self and the varied social milieus he or she must navigate” (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 92). For students struggling to navigate their own identity development in a new culture that is steeped in racist and stereotypical ideologies, then it makes sense for students to act out or misbehave as teacher Anne discussed with “Latino boys.” If a young adolescent is constantly receiving conflicting views about his identity and culture, and the representations that ARE seen are often deviant and negative in nature, then it makes sense for students to mirror the ways dominant American culture sees them; what else are they to do?

As Donaldo Macedo (2006) asserts, “another pernicious mechanism used by academics who suffocate discourses different from their own is the blind and facile call for clarity. Such a call often ignores how language is being used to make social inequality invisible” (p.5). Though Macedo is discussing the issue of “being clearer” and using

more accessible language in academic writing, what this actually does is make invisible the fact that language can be used to hide social inequality. This idea resonates in terms of the language and representation of Latino/a youth and the guise under which it operates as “real” or “true” fact, rather than what it is: a system of oppression that works to disenfranchise and marginalize a group of people to reaffirm the status quo. As Kristin Moran (2011), states, “audiences, including children actively negotiate meaning and use their own experiences to understand the images they see (...) the relationship between audiences and imagery is seen in not only the ways that audiences process the information, but in the ways they explain their own identity” (p. 156). In this act of identity development and formation through consumption of media, we must remember, “language (...) may either confirm or deny the life histories and experiences of the people who use it” (Macedo, 2006, p. 131). It is clear that the language used in the media is seeping into the discussions of and between teachers, student advocates, social workers, members of the school community and students themselves. The focus here now is not just uncovering the ways students are marginalized, but how educators can become advocates for change, to work against what Gloria Anzaldúa argues is the dominant culture that works “as a kind of tyranny” against Latino/a “others” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 67).

Historically, Latino/a populations have been stereotypically represented within media; from Frito Bandito to a Latin Lover, from a gang member and criminal to the “Hot Tamale,” if Latino populations are not represented in stereotypical categories, they

are grossly underrepresented or absent from media portrayal (Mastro, 2003, p. 97). Not much research exists on the relationship between these representations and social perceptions about the Latino/a population. The studies that have been conducted here indicate that there does seem to be a link between television and the reinforcement of majority group social norms that shape beliefs about minorities. Furthermore, those in the majority (Whites) tend to believe television represents reality accurately, and only mirrors back to them what exists in “real life” (Mastro, 2003, p. 97). Because of this, ethnocentricity is reinforced, and these representations may lead to fear or misperception about who Latino/a people are, and what specifically constitutes an immigrant, and how immigrants function within U.S. society. As Mastro (2003) contends, “as a result of the process of categorization, stereotyping is likely (...) and it is these stereotypes that may lead to intergroup conflict and discrimination when inaccurate characteristics are used as dimensions for accentuation” (p. 100). In other words, the stereotypes employed by the media in their representation and discussion of Latino/a documented and undocumented citizens highlights and feeds into misinformation and fear. This assertion is also echoed by Jefferies (2009) as she asserts that “the way that immigration is talked about in the public sphere has direct bearing on the ways that health, education, legal, and political institutions enact policies to deal with this phenomenon” (p. 15). Because the U.S. is a country with a long history of immigration, often tied to the American Dream narrative, young Latino/a peoples navigating the educational system often find themselves confronted with few career prospects after high school, media representations that are

fabricated, unfounded and racist in nature, and scarce prospects of mobility or change. As Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) contend, “it is the best of times and the worst of times” for children of immigrants and undocumented youth. She further states, “while most immigrants enter the country with optimism and an energetic work ethic, many of their children are at risk of being marginalized and ‘locked out’ of opportunities for a better tomorrow” (p. 3).

Additionally, children of immigrants and undocumented Latino/a youth often are relegated to an “at risk” label and tend to achieve less than their native-born counterparts, demonstrate low performance on standardized tests, and have a higher chance of dropping out due to factors such as race, parental education, access to resources, language barriers, and socioeconomic status; not to mention that “several scholars from different disciplines and using a variety of methods have identified another disconcerting phenomenon (...) that length of residency in the United States is associated with declining health, school achievement, and aspirations” (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 6). In other words, Latino young people face additional obstacles in both their educational and cultural experiences, and tend to undergo a “constellation of changes and experiences likely to influence their developing psyches” (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 7).

Throughout these interviews, many patterns emerged that aligned with many of the dominant language used within chapter two in the analysis of news language and image. Many Latino/a students experience racism, oppression and marginalization based

on assumptions from those often in power or those who are recognized as “citizens.” These assumptions mirror the narratives in news media: how immigrants are all “illegal aliens,” that they are violent or criminal, and they do not deserve access to all that America has to offer. Furthermore, these people hold positions of power within school systems: not just teachers but administrators, counselors, and even administrative assistants. There is misunderstanding about immigration and immigration policy, as well as ignorance surrounding whiteness and privilege. The more obstacles that are uncovered the more access to and experience of education for Latino/a students.

The connection between chapter four and my interview findings here are made up of the same or similar experiences and narratives/rhetoric used to describe the experiences for Latino/a students as well as the recognition by educators and support personnel that what is disseminated in news media analysis is also appearing in personal experiences. The students are clearly dealing with the fallout of the stories told in news that get transported to other areas and represented in multiple forms of media. There is overlap between the themes that emerged in chapter four and the themes here: including racist name-calling and representation, misinformation, assumptions around criminality and motivations for Latino/a students, and a repeating act of reductionist behavior by white citizens.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Contrary to what we may have been taught to think, unnecessary and unchasten suffering wounds us but need not scar us for life. It does mark us. What we allow the mark of our suffering to become is in our own hands.
— bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*

I was talking to a young woman who had no more options; she was undocumented and graduated. I told her, well, you could always go back to your country and go to school there. She said, ‘with all due respect, this is my home, I don’t know what’s back there. I’ve been here since I was five. This is all I know.
—Maria

As Latino/a youth grow in number in the United States, the obstacles they face grow in number as well. This research has just touched the surface of a much larger glacier of socioeconomic, cultural, social, and academic challenges that are often and mostly rooted in fear, contempt, misinformation, racism and discrimination, as well as historical and political contexts surrounding who Latino/a people are and their motives for immigrating to the United States. What are also coded within Latino/a populations are the assumptions of citizenship status, and that if a person has brown skin, then they must be an immigrant and an “illegal alien” at that. Many discussions of immigration on the news inevitably lead to a discussion of citizenship and criminality. What is disseminated through dominant news media is trickling into the general population. We tend to conflate news reporting and truth, positioning these reporters and stories as objective analysis of a

neutral problem, rather than a constructed and produced narrative imbedded with bias and intention, an intricate and complex web of producers, advertisers, editors, and agenda. The themes found in chapter four within news analysis suggest what other researchers have found in their research concerning Latino/a stereotypes and narratives of their lived experiences. In Carlos Cortes's (1998) research surrounding Latino/as within popular culture, specifically in films and television as discussed in chapter one, we see that Latino/as are often stereotyped and presented within very narrow representations of Latino/a life, even remarking that Hollywood serves as a kind of curriculum for Latino/a life and experiences. Additionally, for many researchers like Rivadeneyra (2006) Vargas and DePyssler (1998), Perez and Cortes (2011), Suarez –Orozco (2002), Moran (2011), Oboler (2006), Carrasquillo (1991), and others, research has mainly been concerned with issues of belonging, diversity, health, film and television representation, and school experiences within specific geographical areas or grade levels. Kristin C. Moran's (2011) research focuses on Latino/a television consumption among Latino/a youth, but there is little research that focuses on how news media in particular construct and narrate the lives of Latino/a people in relation to immigration. It is my contention, and I argue as evidenced in this research, that there is little public news media discussion and narrative about Latino/a life and experiences without an imbedded and often explicit assumption of legality around citizenship. These two pieces are inextricably linked in news narratives, and these news narratives spreads a misunderstanding of the lives and experiences of Latino/a youth and people who self-identify as Latino/a. Furthermore, there is an

alignment of what is construed in news discussions about immigration and the experiences of Latino/a youth in particular as they negotiate and navigate through the American school system. While there is research that documents the challenges they face, there is little to no research that explicitly examines the connection between news narratives of immigration and their influence within schools and among educators and support personnel. While it is not my intention to simply point fingers, it is my aim to uncover the connection between the two, as well as to argue for recognition of this connection and a change in merging these students into the American public school system.

First, what is specifically interesting is the sheer racism imbedded within the narratives of popular news media around immigration in the United States. Dominant metaphors used to describe Latino/a people and immigrants were explored in chapter four as well as the dominant paradigms in Latino/a representation. However, what is uniquely problematic about analyzing popular news language and images is that news is linked to objective and unbiased reporting of facts, rather than to an understanding that news is produced just like fictional films and television. What makes news specifically dangerous here is that it is read as a black and white truth and this “truth” gets hijacked as grounded in credible research and reporting and used to make decisions about what and how immigrants have access in the United States to resources, schools, and their daily lives. As Barry Glassner (1999) documented in his text *The culture of fear: Why Americans are afraid of the wrong things*, these “truths” are often a recognition of fear, fear of a

particular group of people or way of life. He states, “to blame the media is to oversimplify the complex role that journalists play as both proponents and doubters of popular fears (...)” as he cites Mary Douglas, who

pointed out that every society has almost infinite quantity of potential dangers from which to choose. Societies differ both in the types of dangers they select and the number. Dangers get selected for special emphasis, Douglas showed, either because they offend the basic moral principles of the society or because they enable criticism of disliked groups and institutions (p. xxvi).

In other words, as the U.S. economy continues to be in flux and jobs continue to be outsourced overseas, society tends to blame disliked groups or institutions for our troubles, creating a narrative of blame and fear, instead of examining corporations and laws which have contributed to these problems. Instead of acknowledging these issues as they relate to the United States as a political, social, and economic institution we are spinning narratives about immigration and blaming social ills on Latino/a peoples to create a scapegoat for problems and concerns that have nothing to do with this particular group of people. As evidenced in chapter four, issues of criminality and violence, drugs, and metaphors of “alienness” and “flood” of immigrants are not only coming in “waves,” but causing violence and drug problems, and spilling over from Mexico a violent and criminal element from which the U.S. must protect itself; as these narratives continue to be produced and shared, these stories filter into school discussions and decisions both at the administrative level as well as in the peer experiences of Latino/a students, grounded in these news narratives.

Alternatively, while dominant news narratives did not solely create the inequality and constructed stories about immigration and Latino/a people, they are a part of a much more complex system that has worked to constitute and consistently re-imagine and reinforce these dominant racist realities of immigrant and Latino/a peoples. Furthermore, this research works to point to the ways in which ideology and power in news broadcasts works to add another dimension to a narrative that already existed and is produced by institutional forces concurrently. While these dominant belief systems get constantly transferred among prevailing institutions, these narratives are frequently reinvented and shared under the guise of new information, new threats, or necessary and urgent matters affecting American citizens and the U.S. way of life, not just in popular news networks like the ones I analyzed here, but smaller media outlets and branches of media like advertisements, films, and television. This points to the importance and recognition that these inequalities and institutions are constantly negotiated and disseminated through multiple means, though it is my contention that news media is a dominant and potentially the most dangerous form of narrative dissemination and construction.

Researcher/Subject Re-examined

In media, narratives are neither objective nor vacant of ideology. Instead, media operates to privilege some groups at the expense of others, creating a gap between those who are privileged and those who are not. This gap breeds a sense of fear, domination, control and power. As Allan Johnson (2005) points out, this divide sets people against each other, and in the findings presented in the previous chapters, it is evident that current

Eurocentric media narratives surrounding immigration have made explicit a clear separation between “Americans” and “others,” a complex descriptive system designed to perpetuate an “us” versus “them” mentality. As Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share (2007) state about the complexities of media construction and representation, “when the understanding of media effects is contextualized within its social and historical dynamics, then issues of representation and ideology are extremely useful to media education to explore the interconnections between media and society, information and power” (p. 6). The findings of chapters four and five confirm previous findings that there is an interconnectedness between media, specifically media narratives, and how society constructs information which often times reinforces complex power dynamics and stereotypical representations. The data provided in previous chapters extends previous research on media, its influence on society, and the unique experiences of Latino/as. These findings demonstrate an explicit connectedness of what is represented, disseminated and distributed in major media outlets, most notably and commonly FOX News, and how those representations spread into ideology: the ideology of teachers, peers, administrators, and the dominant culture. Furthermore, this research demonstrates that there is a clear ideology operating both in media and in education under the guise of “news” and “reporting” of an objective truth. While Latino/a students were not interviewed directly in this research, the experiences and responses of educators and administrators of Latino/a youth make it clear that these students are affected through the descriptions of their educators and support personnel. It is not a giant leap to make the

assertion that they are likely experiencing double consciousness, based on the images and dialogues surrounding who they are, the experiences they have, and the lives they live reported often in popular news media in the United States.

By attending to these discoveries, I contend that there is direct correlation between the media narratives constructed around immigration and teacher ideologies and pedagogy; this correlation further affects Latino/a student and family experiences within schooling, particularly in reference to stereotypes/discrimination and racism, crime and violence, issues of citizenship and access, as well as metaphoric constructions around who Latino/a people are as a group.

As I present this research, I must endlessly work to acknowledge the benefit these stories have provided for me in my career pursuits. I also acknowledge that this research has led to a more developed critical consciousness and insight into not only the complex power the media holds, but also how these narratives have far-reaching affects into constructing the lived experiences of Latino/a people. In using critical theory and critical whiteness and critical whiteness as part of my framework, it oriented me to pinpoint the rhetoric and policies around Latino/as and immigration, that they are conflated, and they do marginalize the Latino/a population. This led to a personal moral outrage in the ways that this racism and hegemony was not only cloaked, but disguised; and that ideology and power were threaded throughout the narratives and rhetoric in news media that popped up within my interviews. Through this framework, I was made critically aware of my privilege and was called upon to examine this issue further. I had to negotiate the

responsibility I have as a white educator; my acknowledgement of my whiteness is not to gain praise or to evoke pity for Latino/as. Instead, my goal here is to show how whiteness operates as an oppressive force, and through this acknowledgment as my framework, I was able to peel away the layers of ideology and power covering up how white supremacy was informing the rhetoric and narratives shared in news media. Messages play out in media and they affect us; it behooves us, as Hall (1997) argued, to break apart the codes imbedded within language, and to tease out the messages that are decoded. As I demonstrated in chapters four and five, these messages are imbedded within the news networks and reporters themselves; the themes that emerged are what is being communicated to us, and turned into social practices, particularly in schools, like the ones described in chapter five. These stories are being acted upon as objective truth yet is steeped in a particular ideology that leads to power: this ideology begins to control that which is shared and communicated, and that is where the real oppressive force lies. As Delpit (2006) has said, there is a culture of power that exists, and news media is a part of it. As Hall (1997) argued, once meanings are encoded within language and begin to be decoded, the meaning imbedded becomes naturalized and starts to represent reality. These are dominant hegemonic ideological constructs that oppress and marginalize others.

Moreover, within this research, one of the questions that emerged out of this study was: what does it mean to do interracial research? How can we as researchers work to acknowledge and bring forth these stories without centering our own Whiteness and co-

opting people of color's experiences? If this is unavoidable, then the answer lies in critical awareness. It also begins in the acknowledgment that there are power dynamics at play in gathering and producing knowledge as White researchers. The goal here is for this research process to be reciprocal and mutually beneficial. There may be other ways to support that work, such as creating spaces for marginalized communities to build communities on their own, to operate as a race traitor (Bonilla-Silva, 2009). Within my findings, the severe misrepresentation and racism inherent and explicit in the media analysis section as well as in my interviews speaks to a larger issue: that Latino/a stories are frequently and harmfully co-opted by White narratives and understandings of immigrant experience on a daily basis. It was my hope to be more than what Thompson (2003) argues as a "good white;" in doing so, we center our own Whiteness without realizing it. It is my effort here to invoke Hatch (2002) to "seek to understand the world from the perspectives of those living in it" (p. 7) and acknowledge that my Whiteness, in recruitment and in interviews, always has a danger of reinscribing and reinforcing White supremacy.

Representation Matters

While I did not interview students in this process, it seems that the media depictions and language surrounding immigration and Latino/a students is seeping its way into discussions and understandings of immigration. This is evidenced by the peer discrimination experienced by Latino/a students as stated in the interviews. They are often called "wetbacks" or "beanpickers," which indicates a larger issue: that these types

of racist insults are steeped in racist understandings of the whole process of immigration, and in particular, Latino/a immigrants. As stated in Cortes and Perez (2011), “a study by Pearson (2010) examined how different terms such as ‘illegal aliens’ or ‘undocumented workers’ invoked different levels of prejudice and found that the term ‘illegal alien’s caused greater prejudice (...) indicating that ‘illegal aliens’ is associated with increased perceptions of threat” (p. 4-5). Additionally, the language and images in the media are transferred through discourse, and I would argue, as evidenced in chapters four and five, that language is encoded with images and these coded broadcasts are leaking into our classrooms and affecting our Latino/a students.

As stated in previous chapters, representation matters, and the constructed reality around immigration communicated to the masses is serving to do what Downing and Husband (2005) calls “discursive de-racialization,” people who speak intentionally about racial issues without providing the whole context. As evidenced in my media analysis, the terms “illegal,” “alien,” and “immigrant,” coupled together in multiple variations functions as a way to communicate information about immigration. Because it is presented in a news format, it is read as “true and “objective.” The terms “illegal” and “alien” imply that immigrants are neither human nor of this world. As C. Richard King (2007) argues,

Media texts not only inscribe, adapt, interpret, and invent much of the social vocabulary through which audiences come to know and understand race, but they also unfold as powerful and pleasurable sites within which social subjects can

utilize, negotiate, and apply this vocabulary to craft identities and communities (p. 198).

In other words, the continued use of these terms has been used to create identities about immigrants, and has come to be synonymous with Latino/a. However, through interviewing the teachers and how they approach these students, what appeared specifically dealt with how the news presents ideological truths and understandings of the Latino/a immigrant experience; it became clear that the Latino/a students have to work to overcome obstacles created by these representations. For example, the predominant transcripts in chapter four's content analysis appeared from FOX NEWS within 2008 and early 2011; these transcripts were used because they pulled up a chief usage of the terms "illegal," "alien," and "immigrant." It doesn't seem a coincidence that the predominant usage of these terms appeared in a culturally and ideologically identified "conservative" news source. As Laughey (2007) contends, "the ideological bias of news reporting is powerful precisely because it is concealed under a veil of impartiality" and that "they present 'a way of seeing and understanding the world which favours some interests over others'" (p. 65-66). As FOX News touts their network to be "fair and balanced" it is not much of a logical leap to see the connection between a news source that highlights its impartiality while disseminating dominant ideological narratives about the usefulness and effect of Latino/a immigrants. In other words, Gramsci and Hall argue that media—"in their propensity to serve a hegemonic function for the good of those in power—effectively manufacture consent" (Laughey, 2007, p. 65). The consent that is

manufactured repeatedly is that Latino/a immigrants are dangerous, here without cause other than to participate in criminal activity and intent, and are not of “our world,” that of the United States.

Moreover, if we invoke Hall’s (1997) idea that language is a system encoded by those who construct it and decoded by those who consume it, then stereotypes become, as stated in chapter two, encoded within the very fabric of our culture as something that is carved in stone and objectively “true.” These “truths” that appear in chapter four and five effectively “other” the Latino/a experience. Within these two studies, the document analysis and the interview process, there is overlap between what appears within news broadcasts and the experiences told to me through the interviews with teachers, county school members, and local organizations designed to specifically assist Latino/a youth and families. Furthermore, within the use of the terms “illegal,” “alien” and “immigrant,” what often appeared alongside and framed these terms, or were imbedded in discussions that included these terms were deliberations about who fit under these titles, resources available in the United States and immigrant’s “stealing” of said resources, voter fraud, worthiness of U.S. Constitutional Rights, who and what an American is and who is deserving of such a title, and the concept of “playing by the rules” in order to get ahead and succeed.

One of the “rules” in schools for Latino/a students is not to be Latino/a or to at least deny it. In the interviews, one of the first examples that illustrated an experience of stereotypes was Maria, who told the story of how the students she works with often

experience name calling and assumptions of who they, as Latino/a students are and where they come from; the assumption is imbedded that any student who even “looks” Latino/a is automatically from Mexico and has come from a farming background. This type of personal racism was also carried over into examples of systemic racism, as we saw in Maria’s experiences of assisting families and having to face staff and counselors who continuously operate on their racist assumptions through sabotaging the student from registering for classes. Or, racism was seen on a macro scale, through every day institutions as when we saw a woman trying to sign up for cable and being duped into giving a her fake ID# so that the employee could call police. There is a correlation between what is consumed in media and the viewpoints and behaviors of those who work in schools, institutions, and in communities.

Within the news document analysis, embedded in the racism experienced by students and their families was an assumption of what an American is and who is allowed to be one, whether they’re deserving, and how they affect the U.S.; in invoking name-calling language as well as assuming, over a phone call, that a caller is “illegal” due to their accent is a truth imbedded deeply and discussed frequently in U.S. media and culture. As the economy still struggles and “resources” like oil and government assistance programs are floundering and disappearing, who has access to these scarce commodities is contingent on immigrants, as if the struggles experienced in America today are the result of their “taking” or “stealing” what is not rightfully theirs, which becomes a narrative truth constructed around racist ideologies and inaccurate

assumptions. We also see this in the stories told from Sara who tells us of a rural county in the south that showcase a documentary film about “illegals” coming across the U.S. border from Mexico “to take our community.” As Foucault states, if everyone believes these accounts of immigrant lives to be an accurate “objective truth” then

The types of discourse which [people] accept and (...) function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned...the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Hall, 2007).

In other words, the news delivers descriptions about immigration and construct stereotypes and racist beliefs that get enacted in the local and school communities these immigrants reside in. This was further demonstrated in Lupe’s experience of being the only Latina teacher in a rural high school, and frequently and consistently being asked to speak to students and families who had accents and difficulty with English, whether they were Latino/a or not. It seems that it is true, if truth is derived from and appropriated by news media and consumption, that Latino/a students and their families are “outsiders unable or unwilling to assimilate, as ‘welfare cheats’ draining society, or as people who do not pay taxes wresting jobs from citizens who do” (Vargas and DePyssler, 1998, p. 409). It seems we have an answer to what is communicated as these images and representations accumulate over time: a very simplistic and hegemonic view that reduces an entire culture to criminals, illegals, drains on society, and job stealers. More specifically, in addition to the myriad number of meanings attached to “illegal” and “immigrant” is the assumption that immigrants are criminals, here in the United States to

“occupy” the space to commit acts of violence and to participate in drug smuggling, or, in other words, to take advantage of the United States without care or concern.

In addition to appropriating terms like “alien” and “illegal,” what often accompanies these words are the terms and narratives surrounding crime, criminality, and violence. According to Sheila Brown (2003), news, particularly in reference to crime and reporting crime and violence, uses metaphors to disseminate narratives and shape everyday discourse; just as we’ve seen immigrants turned into metaphorical “aliens” or “waves” of Latino/a immigrants crossing over into the United States,

metaphors are not a substitute for ‘reality’ but an expression of categories of reality; the notion of objectivity where language or image is concerned is simply odd, because it denies the bases on which everyday life works. The meaning systems that we apply to the category ‘crime’ are metaphoric systems; the coherence and consistency of their application operates to sustain certain relations: relationships of similarity/otherness and inclusion/exclusion, most commonly (...) metaphoric media representation intertwines with the sense-making activities in which we engage every time we use language to communicate (p. 45).

To say another way, as we make sense of the news that we encounter, it works often through linking images and groups to metaphoric representation to create meaning about particular groups; and this operates to include and exclude assemblages of people, mark similarity and difference, and create an “us versus them” dichotomy that functions to disenfranchise and marginalize those who embody difference from the majority or status quo. As evidenced in chapter five, Lupe recounted her experiences living in a southern

state working in a semi-rural high school, and she often encountered misunderstandings and assumptions about who she was, where she was from, and what her role was in relation to students who were second language learners, whether they were Latino/a or not. It was assumed she was “Mexican,” instead of differentiating between different Latin American countries; in the assumption of being “Mexican,” it was assumed she was a lawbreaker and a “blanket” representation of all Spanish-speaking peoples. Furthermore, crime and criminality were linked to immigration when Sara recounted the documentary created and shown in a small rural county about how Latino/a immigrants were “taking” the community that “rightfully belonged” to the United States and the “Americans” who occupied it. This film made assumptions about the illegality of immigrants in the United States, linking their presence to the criminality of “stealing” jobs, “stealing” resources, “illegally accessing” governmental assistance, and occupy the U.S to “displace” “true” Americans.

These assumptions and actions based on coding Latino/a immigrants with criminality and violence, disseminated popularly and frequently in news media as evidenced when Anne, a white teacher, references “Latin American boys” as the “biggest pains in the butt” because they “have a lack of participation, discipline problems, and are disrespectful.” This was also a similar kind of discourse found within almost any discussion of Latino/a immigrants or individuals in reporting on illegal and harmful behaviors, often described as “bad,” “ungrateful,” drunks, drug dealers, thieves, murderers, and drug and sex traffickers. These narratives, as argued within issues of news

construction as news is a medium encoded with messages as a meaningful discourse, and the narratives surrounding Latino/a immigrants

is based on the repetition of a problematic. It repeats a situation, a situation that can be fictional or non-fictional. Hence the news series and the current affairs series both present a certain inquiring, fact-finding vision: the situation of reporters observing and collating information, then organizing it for presentation to an uninformed public (Ellis, 2009, p. 204).

News functions and is seen as a truth-telling machine with an air of objective truth, and it does so through the guise of producing and reporting knowledge to a public that “needs to know” the truth, and is currently uninformed. In this discourse, the news is doing the public a favor by just “reporting the facts” of a situation or a “story” so that the public can operate on a more-informed axis. It is this creation of a narrative divorced from any discussion about production, creation, or power and control over what gets reported and how it is framed that allows for a transference of media narratives to travel to the general U.S. populace. It likely trickles down into educational policy and practice, overwhelmingly dominated by white educators and policy makers. This is evidenced in Richard Dryer’s (2009) statement that “it is not stereotypes, as an aspect of human thought and representation, that are wrong, but who controls and defines them, what interests they serve” (p. 207). The interests served seem to be those in positions of power who can make decisions about who gets access to resources within a community, who is able to register for school to access an education, and who is seen as a “troublemaker” or a “wetback” solely in the United States to take something away from those citizens who

have somehow “earned” the privileges afforded to citizens in the United States simply by being born here (or in assuming those who are born here are solely white).

Citizenship, Education, Connection

In the document analysis of chapter four, issues of citizenship underscored all discussions surrounding Latino/a persons as this was the only group to be targeted and labeled “illegal” or “alien.” Assumptions of citizenship, or, who is a citizen and who is not, who has access to become a citizen, and who rightfully “deserves” citizenship is encoded in all discourse surrounding immigration. Despite continual immigration from a myriad of countries from around the world, legally or not, the only other group arguably targeted in this same fashion is Middle Eastern people and culture due to 9/11. In other words, based on my document analysis, in any of the discourse that appeared out of 58 transcripts analyzed, all of them, when the terms “illegal alien” or “immigration” were mentioned, implied and was followed by discussions of Latino/a peoples, mostly focusing on those from Mexico. What was lacking, however, was a comprehensive interrogation of the causes of an increase in immigration from Mexico and other Latin American countries in the last 25 years. Absent are acknowledgements concerning the U.S. economy and the desire of corporations to employ low-wage workers, as well as the relationship in particular between Mexico and the United States after the passage of NAFTA and low tariff taxes on imported and exported goods. According to Perez and Cortes (2011), “decades of failed immigration policies as well as economic push and pull factors have played a central role in increasing the undocumented population in the

United States to approximately 12 million as of 2008” (p. 3). What *does* get discussed, however, is not only racist assumptions about an entire culture of people as well as violence and criminality, but also a language of citizenship. As shown in chapter four, the concept of citizenship does not just concern “illegal aliens” who are here with the “proper” documentation, but also larger discourses on places in the U.S. that are considered “light” or “lenient” on issues of citizenship and access to resources and assistance. As the U.S. economy grows in recession, a gamut of anti-immigration legislation gets produced as those in majority and power believe that undocumented people spawn these social and economic problems and “many Americans view immigrants as threats to their social and psychological well-being, social identity, and national economy” (Perez and Cortes, 2011, p. 4). As immigration is often linked to threats and crime, the term “sanctuary cities” is gaining ground in media broadcasts as more “liberal” or “democratic” areas adopt less racist policing policies and have begun to allow undocumented citizens access to driver’s licenses and in-state tuition, creating more opportunities for these folks to become part of the communities that they’ve come to call home. Many of these cities have begun to change their policies specifically due to the complicated and oftentimes expensive and long-waiting process to become naturalized in the U.S.

Moreover, issues of citizenship are a dominant issue of concern in the public schools for teachers, administrators and school assistance folks. Though it is illegal to ask a student whether they are documented or not, there are clear concerns and anti-

immigrant sentiment located in schools; as discussed in chapter two, “this kind of stuff affects drop out rates and behavior in the classroom.” Parents don’t want to come check on their kids out of fear of being “found out” and deported out of the country. Though students, specifically immigrant students, often have a strong love for education, this is frequently outweighed by the many fears they face in assimilating and learning a new language and culture.

Likewise, also evidenced in chapter five, is the outside culture of not only schools but also the community that often work to “catch” and turn in “undocumented” people. These community attempts are regularly based on frivolous and racist assumptions about someone who “looks” Latino/a and who has an accent or doesn’t speak English with an “American” accent, whatever that is. In these assumptions, as evidenced in chapter three, members of the school *and* community attempt to “trick” these Latino/a community members by asking for social security numbers (which is illegal in schools) as well as “documentation” to set up services like cable. As Downing and Husband (2005) reason, in relation to law enforcement and immigration control policies, that “the United States is in the lead, with its police force and court officialdom only too ready to shunt dismaying percentages of Black and Latino men, in particular, into its jails, and with its militarization of the Mexican border” (p. 79). These community and school members also recognize that undocumented Latino/a families may not understand how the school system works. Because of this lack of knowledge, oftentimes they are taken advantage of because members of schools and communities think that they are unfamiliar with laws

and policies. This is further evidenced in chapter five in that many of the interviewees recognized that schools in the United States are very “westernized” and focus on a “do-it yourself” method which is habitually divorced from community and familial involvement. This is further compounded by members of the school community who may not understand the unique experiences and challenges faced by Latino/a immigrant students as well, as stated in chapter five when Sara, a local advocate for Latino/a students and families, had to intervene on behalf of a family because the school counselors would not provide answers to questions a mother had about her children; often language is a factor in the relationships between Latino/a families and school administrators and counselors. Repeatedly these students get lost in the shuffle because of a language and cultural barrier, but also because they are viewed as just “one more student” who has “special needs” like language and cultural assistance to be able to communicate with a Latino/a student’s family about their success in educational development. For students without documentation who are not legal citizens, their prospects for education and access to higher education are dismal at best. Many of these students deal daily with the assumptions made by others as to their citizenship status, access, and opportunity and are forced to negotiate these obstacles, sometimes, without any assistance.

For some, like Anne, she does not discuss immigration or immigrant issues in her classes, and wishes that students who are going to come to the United States would learn English first. In her testimony, she is uneducated about the way undocumented people

ingratiate themselves into the United States, largely due to the misinformation disseminated from news media, particularly since they often times only focus on criminality, violence, illegality, and citizenship as it pertains to who is *allowed* access and who is not. As Andrea Mayr (2008) states about news media,

The sourcing and legitimization of news is bound up with the actions, opinions, and values of dominant groups in society. In this way, the media tend to function ideologically (...) simply through the nature of established routine practices. In simple terms this means that we find the news media blame certain social groups for economic and social decline or for rising crime rates, leaving aside issues of social deprivation that marginalize certain people in the first place. They thereby gloss over and render largely invisible the material conditions of many people (p. 2).

Within discussions of Latino/a peoples as implied in the language of immigration, their experiences are often marginalized and definitely glossed over, particularly since, as Lupe laments, “it’s not being clarified as to what Latino or Hispanic is (in the media) [and] they don’t mention other countries so people just think ‘Mexican.’” The routine practice then of popular news media discourse is to populate the idea that Latino/a people are “illegal aliens” who do not deserve citizenship due to their drug connections, criminality and violence they inevitably bring. This dominant narrative of Latino/a immigrants has clearly leaked into the personal experiences of teachers, administrators and assistants who work with Latino/a families and students, making issues of citizenship and access to legal citizenship that much more of an up hill battle.

Furthermore, issues of being labeled an “other” take away ownership of Latino/a subjectivity and are treated as an object to be handled, studied, and controlled.

Additionally, other metaphoric representations were at play within the news media analysis often dealing with immigrants as waves or tsunamis coming to destroy the United States, like a natural disaster. The implication here is that Latino/a immigrants have invaded the United States and have *chosen* to break U.S. laws, implying that there is a legal way to access citizenship and Latino/a peoples have simply ignored the “right” and “legal” way of doing so. This implication simply reinforces the criminal aspect of the Latino/a population, and assumes that those coming across a border are consciously shirking the system, which, through circular reasoning, leads back to the claim that they are only concerned with drugs, violence and criminal behavior. Furthermore, imbedded within these narratives is the belief that by “anchoring” themselves here, invading the U.S., and creating, by their very presence and movement, a “natural disaster,” that this constitutes a kind of invasion, one that must be stopped at all costs. All of these metaphors, however, are wrapped up and implied and coded within the most common metaphor, as stated before: illegal alien. According to dominant narratives, these “illegal aliens” are “flooding” the United States, bleeding into the reserved nooks and crannies only meant for “real” U.S. citizens, “real” Americans. Depicted as a flood, immigrants are hard to clean up, wrangle, and keep at bay because, quite simply, while their humanity has been removed through identifying them as other than human, their connection to nature as an uncontrollable force has remained. Though they are not of this planet as implied by the use of alien, they are of nature, a type of nature that is a disaster and one that cannot be foreseen, controlled, and easily removed. Often Latino/a persons

(often just called immigrants, as if the only persons entering the United States are of Latino/a descent but specifically indicates and assumes Mexico) are “invading” and “breaking into” the United States, like drug-crazed “banditos” bent on enacting their “foreign” criminality to steal American resources. As discussed, positioning Latino/a immigrants as an invasion indicates a war, a war between the United States and the outside invading force that is not taking what is “rightfully” theirs. Instead, it rightfully belongs to the United States and in positioning discourse in this way, creates a space for “real” U.S. citizens to “take back” what is “rightfully” theirs. Within this logic, it becomes patriotic to fight against immigrants, a U.S. citizens’ American “duty.”

The experiences of Latino/a students in relation to their white counterparts, experiencing bullying and name-calling, is related to assumptions about who immigrants are. For interviewee Maria, who works with Latino/a students and families, she often times has to correct the school administrators and teachers she works with when they call a student “illegal” or “alien,” and point out that they are simply undocumented. Furthermore, she acknowledges that within news media and political coverage, only the bad or negative images and discussions are had surrounding immigration rather than the many contributions both documented and undocumented Latino/a members of the community. We just focus on the “gang perception” of Latino/a peoples and don’t join in any real discussions about their experiences, their reasons for relocating, and how the relationship between the United States, Mexico and other Latin American countries contributes to the rise of immigration. Overall, the misinformation of media discourse

operates as the sole curriculum for discussions and education around immigration and Latino/a peoples, and this media representation, because it is the only access to information on immigration most U.S. people have, works to spread misunderstanding, breed racist beliefs and behaviors, and misdiagnose an entire immigrant movement. This is further compounded by the ideological development of teachers and administrators, and how they treat students who are of Latino/a descent.

Suggestions for Future Research

Whiteness

I have argued that one of the most important recognitions necessary in conducting this research lies in the issue of whiteness. What I did not want and do not want to do in acknowledging my Whiteness here as a researcher is participate in what I discussed in chapter one as “white educational discourse” (Haviland, 2008), reinforcing and centering the status quo by glossing over issues of racism and White supremacy. I am not seeking praise or recognition in acknowledging my whiteness. What I do want to acknowledge is that Whiteness matters, especially when a White researcher is conducting investigation into issues of racism where part of said research serves as a benefit to the researcher. This research does benefit my career and serves a personal purpose and it is important and necessary to acknowledge this. However, it is also important to recognize that the development of a critical consciousness and insight is also important and necessary in order to work as social justice educators. In researching the narratives

circulated about Latino/a people, how it affects Latino/a children in schools, and the real and difficult obstacles faced both by students and advocates for these students has real connections to White supremacy and racism, as most dominant narratives are contextually produced and grounded. I asked the question in the beginning of this research when describing my methods, what might my whiteness mean in my investigation into how news media narratives get reified and produced within pedagogy and curriculum? As I answered this question in chapter one, I did not want to “exacerbate racist effects of schooling” on students of color (Hyland, 2005, p.429). Rather, my goal was to destabilize white identity and expose it, and demonstrate how whiteness directly contributes and is the crux of this issue I explore here in this research: the narrative and rhetoric developed to marginalize Latino/a people. As this research indicates, in the document analysis of news media and narratives it was always a white person relaying racist and discriminatory reports about Latino/a peoples and immigrants, and if there was a person of color present, they often were brown-skinned and/or self-identified as Latino/a descent likely used to lend credibility to the white reporter discussing and reporting on immigration and the Latino/a rhetoric. It is not my goal to participate in color blindness (Bonilla-Silva and Lewis, 1999), but to make known that in any future research into the ways immigration and Latino/a experiences are created and produced within news media, that issues of Whiteness must be addressed and acknowledged and is directly connected to historical and political components of White supremacy. For further research to be conducted on this topic, which I argue is not only necessary but needed,

avoiding reproducing White supremacy on the part of the researcher or researchers needs to be at the forefront in developing methods to gather additional data and further de-cloak the issues surrounding news media and immigration. Further, it is not enough to become critically aware, as that only serves the purpose of me, the researcher; instead, I want to inspire moral outrage in others who read this work, and in that outrage, provide motivation for others to continue to seek this information out and make connections; search and be aware of how news media constructs narratives; continue to ask how these narratives and rhetoric get communicated and transfer to others? How do these narratives get embedded into our collective unconscious that we begin to operate from as a reality?

Also, it is also important to acknowledge that the privilege Whiteness affords may be used as an ally, to bring to light information and research that should be shared and explored in order to work social justice. This is a complicated relationship, and one that needs to not only be made explicit and acknowledged, but also admitted to as one of the main factors to the difficulties faced by those who identify as Latino/a. Again, to reinforce, my goal is not to elicit pity or sympathy for Latino/as. It is to elicit outrage about what is happening that is a catalyst to praxis to inspire a movement of change and a development of critical media literacy within pedagogy.

Also, for future research, in order to work to keep Whiteness from working as an additional oppressor, it would be worth considering that one White researcher may not be the right choice for uncovering these narratives and experiences of Latino/a youth so that we may dig deeper into the effects and implications of news media narratives and how

deeply they seep into the construction of experiences around immigration and education. One of these possibilities lies in searching for different search terms or investigate the terms “Latino/a,” “Chicano/a,” “Hispanic,” and “Mexican” to see if these terms turn up terms and labels like “illegal alien,” “immigrant,” or “illegal immigrant.” It would be necessary, if this research were to continue, to cast a wider net and see more complexity in how other immigrant groups may be categorized, and more investigation into why Latino/as are more focused and legislated than others. The idea would be to cast the net wider, so to speak, and investigate how much further these ideological narratives and rhetoric have spread.

Counter-Narratives

One of the ways I advocate for addressing issues of whiteness in further research is approaching the adoption of counter-narratives. According to Michael Bamberg (2004), “counter strategies seem to be guided by a deep concern with power and hegemony” (p. 353). Counter strategies can work not only to challenge those in positions of power and uncover the ways hegemony works to oppress others, it can also work against centering whiteness as both a researcher and a participant in the subjugation of Latino/a stories and experiences. Or, while it is important to discuss the implications of news broadcasts and the narratives produced and constructed, those narratives should not be foregrounded; it is more important to highlight and center the experiences of Latino/a students as they recount the occurrences of their own schooling and living daily lives within a monochromatic, white-centered culture. As Bamberg (2004) further states,

Narrative lends itself not only to connecting past events to present states (as well as imagined, desired states and events) but also to revealing character transformations in the unfolding sequence from past to future. In other words, narratives, as a particular speech genre, may be able to offer something to the presentation of selves (and others) that other speech genres don't do (...) these approaches are apt, and often even designed, to reveal discrepancies between the told and the lived, and to reveal the fragmentations and the unknown in the narrative charting of self and identity (p. 354).

What needs to be underscored here is the difference between what is told and what is lived; here is where I argue counter narrative strategies can work to dismantle the hegemonic representations of Latino/a life while simultaneously working to de-center the dominant narratives within the news to open up new spaces for narratives directly from Latino/a students and individuals. What is important here is to make transparent these discrepancies in order to decentralize hegemonic constructions of reality.

This aligns with the concept of conscientizacao, what Paulo Freire deems a critical consciousness, a process where students are empowered subjects and achieve an awareness about the world around them and the shape their lives take in order to be agents of their own change and experiences. Counter narratives operate in this way as Bamberg (2004) also asserts, for the possibility of 'becoming,'

That is, as undergoing processes of transformation—as for instance from being inagentive and passive at one location and time coordinate of one's life, to becoming involved and agentive with the crossing into new spatio-temporal territory (as in immigrating to a new country or becoming a father). The possibility of arranging the interplay of space, time, and character transformations along these lines is a critical cultural and historical accomplishment, since it has opened up an opportunity to overcome epic ascriptivism and depict characters as

in flux and searching; searching to fulfill desires, searching for a good life, searching one's <real> identity (p. 357).

What Bamberg is stating here is that by using counter narratives we allow the opportunity for participants to take ownership of their own experiences and illustrate the “in flux” state of becoming, as all human beings are constantly doing; furthermore, I see this as invoking and allowing for what Freire (1974) referenced as dialogue, “born of a critical matrix, dialogue creates a critical attitude. It is nourished by love, humility, hope, faith, and trust. When the two ‘poles’ of the dialogue are thus linked by love, hope, and mutual trust, they can join in a critical search for something. Only dialogue truly communicates” (p. 40). In other words, a relationship must be established between researcher and participant(s), and through producing counter narratives, dialogue can take place that works to challenge hegemonic depictions and representations of Latino/a life and experiences.

Though I argue for this as a way to challenge and work against centering white narratives to instead highlight the stories told by those who are agents of their own lives, I recognize that we can never truly step outside of these dominant narratives and hegemonic representations, as evidenced by Bamberg (2004) as he states,

There are always certain aspects of dominant stories that are left intact, while others are reshaped and reconfigured. Speakers never totally step outside the dominating framework of the master narrative, but always remain somewhat complicit and work with components and parts of the existent frame ‘from within,’ (p.363).

While research that uncovers and reveals these counter narratives is necessary, I find it also pertinent to acknowledge that for future white researchers and for myself it is essential to realize that we cannot fully step out of the dominant master narratives in which we live and operate, but what we can do is work to make them explicit and provide counter narratives and employ counter strategies to challenge the master narratives at work. My participants and I are not separate from the master narratives that operate in the United States around immigration, immigrants, and all of us are exposed to the news broadcasts and media flooding that is so indicative of U.S. culture. However, for future research, I advocate for a more rigorous approach to make these master narratives and how they operate in our culture known, as well as working to participate in counter narratives through first person storytelling.

Storytelling

In order to continue to work toward education for critical consciousness, we must work to unsettle

the typical narratives about race relations that circulate in mainstream media and popular culture, narratives that gloss over or oversimplify the realities of racism, invoking what Patricia Williams calls ‘premature community’ and in so doing, block the awareness, knowledge and concerted action so necessary to finally progress on this matter (Bell, 2010, p. 2).

One of the ways we can do this, particular for future research concerning Latino/a students is to enact not only counter-narratives from the point of view of Latino/a

students, but do so through the act of storytelling for social justice. As researchers, using stories, particularly when researching around issues of race and racism, can demonstrate that

how we talk about race matters. It provides a roadmap for tracing how people make sense of social reality, helping us to see where we connect with and where we differ from others in our reading of the world, and it defines the remedies that will be considered as appropriate and necessary. While talk in and of itself can't dismantle racism, a critical analysis of how we talk about racism as a society and as members of differently positioned racial groups, provides a way for us to see ourselves and others more clearly, understand the racial system we have inherited, recognize the different roles played by Blacks, whites and other racial groups in this history, and come to grips with the urgent work still to be done to dismantle racism and live up to the promises of equality in our national rhetoric and governing documents (Bell, 2010, p. 4).

Revealing counter narratives that challenge and complicate the master immigration narratives produced by news media are pivotal in de-cloaking how we talk about race, but it's also necessary to include the ways in which participants see themselves within the stories they tell, both as teachers and administrators, but also as students. By invoking what Lee Anne Bell (2010) describes as the Storytelling Project Model as a pedagogical tool, I borrow from this model for future research that can work to more accurately and specifically uncover the ways race is constructed as a form of difference and how power and privilege get sorted to the benefit of some groups over others. As Bell (2010) argues, "stories are one of the most powerful and personal ways that we learn about the world, passed down from generation to generation through the family and cultural groups to which we belong (...) and stories can be deeply evocative sources of knowledge and

awareness” (p. 16). While I included personal interviews with teachers and administrators or members of the school community who work with Latino/a populations, this research needs to be expanded to include Latino/a students in multiple schools at multiple levels in K through 12 education, as well as teachers, both White and of color to scrutinize the complex ways race and racism work to infect the experiences of these students within public education as well as how this works as either a pedagogical tool on the part of teachers or as complex webs of obstruction for administrators and policy makers. Bell (2010) underscores this as she writes,

stories operate on both individual and collective levels, [and] they can bridge the sociological, abstract with the psychological, personal contours of daily experience. They help us to connect individual experiences with systemic analysis allowing us to unpack in ways that are perhaps more accessible than abstract analysis alone (p. 16).

It is my contention that in the act of storytelling, counter narratives will emerge that not only challenge the dominant master narratives of news media but also reinstate the human aspect of who immigrants are, especially for students who are children who not only have a right to an education, but who also deserve the same opportunity to gain access to one. Furthermore, stories and counter narratives operate to challenge the status quo and offer alternative ways of constructing democratic societies through sharing alternative viewpoints and experiences that differ from dominant ideology, both as a nation but also within schools.

In addition, employing storytelling and counter narratives also falls in step with Freire's (1970) notion of developing a critical consciousness and participating in dialogue, particularly in research so that the only voice that is heard is not the researchers and their interpretation but also those of real participants and the authentic experiences of their lived daily lives; this not only works to dispute dominant master narratives in society as a whole, but also to confront the researcher's interpretations as well, particularly if they are White. Storytelling creates a multi-faceted interrogation of race and racism on both a macro and micro level, congruently challenging both news master narratives as well as complicating the positionality of a White researcher conducting research about people of color. As Bell (2010), acknowledges,

too often, when we, particularly white people, talk about race we use abstract language, treating racism as something 'out there' but not 'here' in our daily lives (...) [while] the aesthetic experience of stories told through visual arts, theater, spoken word and poetry, can help us think more creatively, intimately and deeply about racism and other challenging social justice issues (p. 17).

Of course, while I encourage future research to integrate these methods, it is important to acknowledge that stories are contingent on power relations with society that can influence the relationship between participant and researcher. Furthermore, not all stories are equally heard, acknowledged and reported. This is further complicated again by White researchers, and "all too often discussions of race and racism in the white mainstream, or 'whitestream,' reify and repeat stock stories developed by the dominant group to put them and their group in a favorable light vis-à-vis others" (Bell, 2010, p. 18). Because of

this, awareness and critical self-interrogation is a requirement when studying how master new narratives operate on systemic and personal levels to oppress people of color, specifically Latino/a immigrants. As members of a dominant group, we may invoke what Gloria Anzaluda calls “racial blank spots—the selective editing of reality that allows white people to disengage from the racial advantages we enjoy” which offers White researchers an opportunity to enact “critical engagement with stock and concealed stories” that offers us a way to “stay engaged and thus responsive and responsible to racial others” (Bell, 2010, p.19). At looking and recording this research produced here, as a White researcher I argue this is crucial if I and other White researchers are to conduct further research into Latino/a lived experiences and the master narratives that harm and oppress them. We must constantly be responsible to our participants if our goal is to reveal the hegemonic constructed realities permeating immigrant lives across the United States.

Another issue that is necessary to discuss is that people of color often bear the responsibility of talking about race and racism, and while I advocate for stories and counter narratives it is important to also include for future research a sharing of this burden by dominant members of the community to which Latino/a students and teachers/administrators live and experience the world. This would include interviewing and discussing these issues with both white students and teachers/administrators as well, to uncover the ways that master narratives around immigration are also affecting their experiences, and perhaps to make explicit the ways that they consciously or

unconsciously perpetuate racist ideologies or pedagogy, or how white students are affecting the experiences of Latino/a students within schooling. Since often these stories, both on the part of White researchers and participants as well as participants of color, I argue that we also need a team of diverse researchers to conduct this research rather than a single researcher.

Allied Research Practices

According to hooks (2013), “all children in this nation are inundated from birth on into adulthood with white supremacist thinking and practice” which most notably comes from mass media (p. 12). Within the research presented here in these chapters, it is evident that White supremacy is informing the dominant narratives about immigration in this country. Additionally, one of the steps toward becoming and working as a white ally is to challenge racist ideologies and power, and also work to expose these within culture and institutions. . To continue this, it is imperative to actively work as a white ally so that researcher and researched can work together to establish a flow of criticality in order to use the research as potential advocacy; and to consistently and transparently acknowledge privilege and who’s benefit of this research in revealing racist practices. It’s important to also admit that these individual acts do not make an ally; there must be a consistency over time of challenging racism individually and systemically as well as working to de-center Whiteness. As bell hooks (2013) asserts,

Diversity could not and cannot have meaningful transformative significance in any world where white supremacy remains the underlying foundation of thought and practice. A huge majority of unenlightened white folks believe that the mere presence of ‘difference’ will change the tenor of institutions. And while no one can deny the positive power of diverse representation, representation alone is simply not enough to create a climate supportive of sustained diversity (p. 27).

Since White supremacy informs much of what is disseminated from mass media, it is important to acknowledge that future research in this area must be actively working to be transformative through storytelling and counter narratives. This research has the potential to coalesce both theory and practice, but in order to do so, future researchers have to work together, and work to acknowledge all racial oppressions that operate in both implicit and explicit ways.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2021, one in four students will be of Latino/a descent. As the population grows, what are the future implications for Latino/a students? How will the face of education, as well as teachers and administrators, need to change to accommodate the needs of these students? More research demands to be conducted as the rate of Latino/a population grows, and as such more research is needed to explore how these students can access education and do so without limiting access. As Moran (2007) attests, “children growing up in an environment that reinforces white privilege do not need to be sheltered from reality but should have their experiences validated so that they are comfortable taking ownership of being American” (p. 163). In other words, the experiences of Latino/a students need to be centered and explored

through multiple viewpoints as researchers unpack the complexities of Latino/a experiences within U.S. schools.

Concluding Thoughts

According to Kellner and Share (2007), we live in a world where broadcasting and “emergent information and computer media” play a powerful role in “organizing, shaping, and disseminating information, ideas, and values” which leads to what Henry Giroux called a public pedagogy (p. 3). Because of this, dominant and oppressed groups should work to be more aware of how this occurs, how media affects us, constructs meaning, educates audiences, and teaches messages and values to those who consume it. Further, as McLaren (2002) discussed regarding cultural imperialism, media is one of these dominant cultural forces, and works to shape discourse, which provides those who construct narratives within media “considerable control over the shaping of our routine experiences of the world and the way we classify the world. They therefore have power to foster particular kinds of identities to suit their own purposes” (Mayr 1). Not only does the media have considerable power over shaping the world we live in, they do so through “institutional procedures and practices that define what becomes news more so than the events themselves (...) it is because of these institutional, practical and financial concerns that news media offer only a partial view of the world that fits with the interests of the socially and economically powerful” (Mayr 2). The media works as a hegemonic institution that disseminates inaccurate images, and through this, media may distort a student’s self-image, self-worth, ability and access to exercise a critical consciousness.

To end, I borrow a concept from Ozlem Sensoy's article *Social Education and Critical Media Literacy: Can Mr. Potato Head help challenge binaries, essentialism, and orientalism?* when she states,

The goal isn't to make, or count on, schools and the world out there to be perfect places, representing exactly or accurately what being Turkish, Muslim, female, and so on, means or looks like. Rather, the goals are to identify the complexities of group identities in order to collapse artificial binaries embedded in school and media representations of social groups; to develop alternative ways of knowing group stories; to become 'perspective detectives,' in order to reveal and preserve the complexities of social histories, social life and interactions (p.595).

The idea is to recognize the potential in combining pedagogy and media literacy, and to ask whether schools have a place in teaching students to become "perspective detectives" as technology and media continue to grow and work reciprocally; do schools have a responsibility in including media literacy as part of their curriculum for the 21st century? I would argue that they do, and that without media literacy the effect of dominant news narratives perpetuated as truth will continue to grow and do harm to all of us. The bigger the chasm between schools, curriculum, and external educational experiences, the bigger the inequity in accessing an education. What I want my audience to take away from this research then is to "identify the complexities of group identities in order to collapse artificial binaries" and engage in what I have called for here: not just a critical consciousness but an enactment of alternative ways of knowing and inquiry: storytelling, counter-storytelling, and the building of community in order to make known dominant

and oppressive narratives. We should all begin to be perspective detectives, and take a step in becoming critically conscious consumers of media.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about the kind of media you like or are interested in.
 2. Tell me about your students.
 3. Tell me about the challenges your students face.
 4. Tell me about the challenges you face in your position.
 5. Tell me your thoughts about immigration.
 6. Tell me about the news you consume.
 7. Tell me about your background.
 8. Tell me about the policies that impact your teaching or position.
 9. Tell me about your teaching style and pedagogy.
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